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FINALLY! PANTS THAT REALLY FIT
10
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Thoughts

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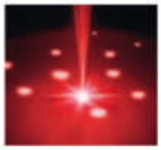

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the Simple List

YOUR MONTHLY DOSE OF USEFUL TIDBITS, TIMELY TRIVIA, AND CATCHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

15
BILLION

How many years will pass before the world's most accurate timekeeper—the atomic clock—will be off by even one second, according to an April 2015 study published in *Nature Communication.* Called an atomic clock because it relies on microwaves from the vibrations of atoms, the newest version (there have been many) weighs a ton and is stationed in a laboratory in Boulder, Colorado. It includes thermometers and shielding to curb mistakes caused by environmental heat. The accuracy of atomic clocks helps cell phones, computers, and GPS devices all over the world synchronize more accurately (well, by the picosecond). With them, scientists can even measure the earth's gravitational shifts, which may lead to new discoveries in quantum physics. And thanks to them, your cell phone and computer will instantly adjust to daylight saving time on November 1—even if *you* don't.

$49.41

What it cost last year to feed a table of 10 Thanksgiving dinner, reports the latest annual American Farm Bureau Federation price survey. That was a 37 cent increase over 2013. Every year, the federation sends out volunteer shoppers from across the country with the same list of Thanksgiving staples to scout out and report on the best prices, ignoring promotions and sales. Even with a 16-pound bird costing a little over $20, along with price jumps for sweet potatoes, whipping cream, milk, crudités, green peas, and pumpkin pie mix, the volunteers still spent less than $50 total after piling on the cranberries, piecrusts, stuffing, and rolls, plus basics, such as coffee, butter, evaporated milk, onions, eggs, sugar, and flour. Need help managing your Thanksgiving feast? Turn to page 164.

30

The approximate number of days it takes to recycle bottles, cans, and cardboard, turn them into new objects, and sell them in stores, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. How does one cereal box, for example, become a board game? (Actually, it takes four boxes.) In short, the box and other paper items are first picked up curbside and taken to a materials-recovery facility. Bales that can weigh 1,800 pounds are then sent to a paper mill and machine-molded into paperboard that's dried and rolled. Eventually the paperboard is shipped to the game manufacturers, who send their products to stores for purchase. This November 15, America Recycles Day, brush up on everything you can recycle (sneakers! bras!) and take a pledge to do so at americarecyclesday.org/pledge.

Written by
N. Jamiyla Chisholm
Illustration by
Darling Clementine

7

The number of ounces of Cheddar cheese that nachos creator Ignacio Anaya reportedly used when he invented the dish in 1943, according to the Piedras Negras Office of Conventions and Visitors, in Mexico. According to legend, Anaya (nicknamed "Nacho") was the maître d' at the Victory Club, in the city of Piedras Negras, when about a dozen hungry U.S. military wives walked into the eatery. Missing a cook, he cut tortillas into triangles, covered them with shredded cheese, heated everything in a broiler, then topped it all off with sliced jalapeños. Currently, Piedras Negras hosts one of the world's largest nacho festivals. If that's too far to go to celebrate, you're in luck: November 6 is National Nacho Day.

100x

How much more antioxidant power is contained in spent coffee grounds compared with blueberries, according to the authors of a recent study published in *LWT–Food Science and Technology.* In other words, it takes just one gram of coffee grounds to do the job of 3.5 ounces of blueberries. In a quest to figure out a way to use what your latte leaves behind, researchers discovered that coffee grounds and silverskin (the outer layer surrounding coffee beans, which is usually discarded during processing) pack a serious antioxidant punch, even after roasting and brewing. The researchers are now recommending that food brands develop ways to incorporate these nutrient-packed leftovers into yogurt, cheese, bread, and more. And here you thought coffee couldn't be any more essential to life...

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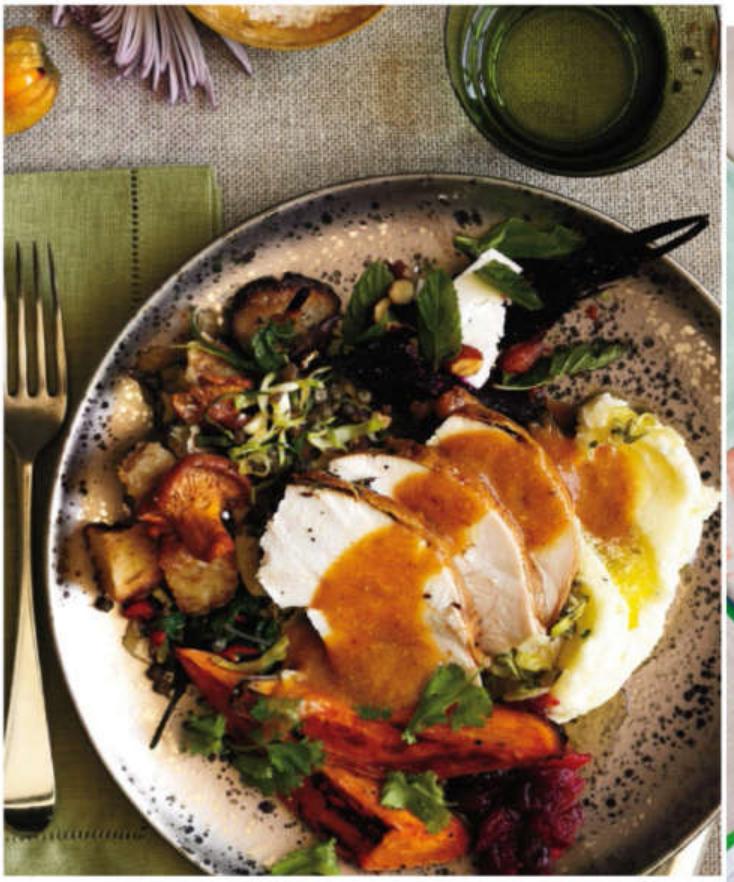

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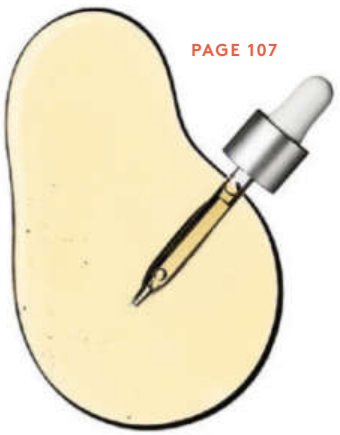

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WE ASKED:

How do you stay sane when you have a full house during the holidays?

Susan Silverman
Showing the guests what's available for breakfast and alerting them it's a self-service kitchen. That way they can eat what they want when they want, and I can relax, drink my coffee alone, and shower in peace.

Carol Stuber Schierbaum
Try to prep as far in advance as you can. Even cookies can be made and frozen.

Jamie Banister
I make sure to find a reason to "run to the store" for something every couple of days. A half hour to decompress in the car and wander around the grocery store by myself is magical.

SEASONAL SALAD RECIPES

A healthy, vibrant salad (like Grilled Radicchio Salad with Goat Cheese and Grapes, shown here) can be a delicious complement to the rest of your Thanksgiving feast. Visit realsimple.com/fallsalads for more salad ideas and Turkey Day inspiration—including no-bake desserts, DIY centerpieces, and easy pie-flavored ice creams (!).

BOTTOM: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHNNY MILLER; FOOD STYLING BY REBECCA JURKEVICH; SET DESIGN BY JEFFREY W. MILLER

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Editor's Note

"HOW CAN I HELP?" First of all, don't say that.

Perhaps you've been in this situation: A friend, an acquaintance, or a member of your community experiences a terrible thing. A tragedy, in the fullest sense of the word. You want to help, but you don't know what the person really needs or likes or wants. And you don't—you can't—completely understand what she's going through. So, with the best of intentions, you ask, "How can I help?" Which then becomes one more thing she has to think about, and so is not very helpful at all.

When tragedy struck the family of Melissa and Darrin Santos, their community of Cold Spring, New York, didn't ask. They just *did*. Some of the help was basic: setting up meal delivery, raising money, finding housing. And some was simple but extraordinary: like getting new sports equipment for the Santos boys. In other words, relevant and specific. For the complete inspiring story, plus some extremely helpful hand-lending do's and don'ts, turn to "With a Little Help From Our Friends" (page 190).

And while we're on the subject, there are many relevant and specific, if less heroic, ways to help your fellow man (well, party host) as you enter the holiday season. "Party Guest Protocol" (page 176) is crammed (a technical term) with relevant, specific tips on how to be the best possible guest this year. Including such topics as proper RSVPing, how to discreetly dispose of an olive pit, and, of course, "ghosting." Don't know about ghosting?

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@KVANOGTROP

I didn't, either, until I read this story and found out that it's a *veryverymery* rude thing I've done all my life. Ghosting is when you—I mean I—leave a party without saying good-bye. As it turns out, unless you are at the Rockefeller Center Christmas-tree lighting or the Super Bowl, someone is probably noticing you (me) slink out. And that someone is the host. So, fellow ghosters, let's make a pledge: Starting today we're going to take two minutes, find the host, say a quick thank-you, and leave the party knowing that we have exited gracefully.

As with so many things in life, remember: It's not about you. Which means, whether you're attending a holiday party or helping someone truly in need, you put another's comfort before your own convenience. No more ghosting, and no more "How can I help?" You're smarter than that. Just see what needs to be done, and do it.

Kristin van Ogtrop

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PHOTOGRAPH BY PERRY HAGOPIAN; HAIR BY PAUL WARREN USING RENE FURTERER FOR ART DEPARTMENT; MAKEUP BY MELISSA SILVER FOR MAYBELLINE NEW YORK. BY MALENE BIRGER EMBELLISHED BLOUSE, $495, SHOPBOP.COM.

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Your Words

Q.

What in your life are you most thankful for?

A.

Evening walks with my grandfather. I am one of over 20 grandkids, and those were an opportunity for me to spend quality time with him and listen to his many stories, which I'll never forget. He carved a pint-size walking stick for me that matched his own. Now his walking stick resides in my hallway as a constant reminder of those shared moments.
KRISTEN NELSON, Portland, Oregon

I am most grateful to my sister for giving me a kidney. Thank you, Debbie!
SANDRA FISHER, Greene, Rhode Island

Hands down, my husband of 42 years. Polar opposites in almost everything except values, we've navigated the white-water rapids of raising eight kids and made our home in a trailer, a mansion, and everything in between. We've pastored churches with and without pay and learned to cultivate our own private brand of dark humor for and from dark times. We've fought the good fight (more than one, actually) and emerged as each other's champion and cheerleader. Be it feast or famine, I'll still put down the spoon of whatever I'm stirring to slow dance in the kitchen with this one.
LAURA COWAN, Bishop, California

An intact sense of humor. I love to giggle, chuckle, and laugh until I cry. Even if I don't feel the funny in a tough moment, I have the ability to look back and recap the serious with levity.
KRISTEN DEHLER, Sag Harbor, New York

OUR MOST POPULAR ANSWERS THIS MONTH INVOLVED FAMILY. (FOR MANY, THAT ALSO INCLUDED THE FURRY VARIETY.)

A simple upbringing. My parents were high school sweethearts and raised us in the same small town they grew up in. Never having much, but always having each other, they instilled a strong work ethic and genuine kindness into their children. The older I get, the more thankful I am for that foundation.
STACY CASSIO, Fort Mill, South Carolina

I am most thankful for my cat, Kibbles. She and I have been through moves, relationships, job changes, and more. She's my family, and she can't wait for the Thanksgiving turkey!
TAMMY RUSSELL, Bay City, Texas

I'm thankful that every day starts with promise and I'm given a new opportunity. It's up to me how it turns out.
CRISTINA M. ROBERTS, Cabot, Arkansas

Illustration by Ben Wiseman

I'm thankful for my girlfriends. They've stood by me through some tough times, and I'm eternally grateful for their presence in my life.
LISA LOVELL,
Havelock, North Carolina

I am thankful for the opportunity to see the sweet moments of childhood through the eyes of my daughter. Doing something for the first time, conquering a challenge, and being unabashedly silly are easy to forget about in the grown-up world.
AMY LERITZ, St. Louis, Missouri

Friends who are family.
@JESSIEJ102

Oddly, my divorce. It has allowed me to focus on my daughter and true friends and helped me figure out who I really am. Finding happiness through this difficult time makes me appreciate life that much more.
LISA JOHNSON,
Royersford, Pennsylvania

I am thankful for my literacy. Reading has allowed me to visit places that exist only in one's imagination. When I was a child, it provided me a place to escape to when I felt helpless. In my adult life, it has allowed me to learn more about myself and to appreciate the uniqueness of all of us. I cannot imagine a world where I wasn't able to read, although that is the reality for some.
CARMEN FLETTRE,
Roseville, Minnesota

Unlimited green bean casserole!
JENNIFER ROETHEMEIER,
Jacksonville Beach, Florida

SUBSCRIBER OF THE MONTH

KRISTIN McNAMARA
HER ANSWER: I can't even begin to say how thankful I am for food—the type that brings up memories and creates moments. One bite of my great-grandmother's pumpkin-pie cake and I recall childhood holiday performances in the living room of my aunt's house. The egg rolls from my husband's favorite Chinese restaurant remind me of our first apartment and the new life we were setting out to create. And just slicing fresh avocado brings back my daughter's green, grinning face as she tasted her first "real" food.

STATS: 33; married, with a 2½-year-old daughter; homemaker and co-owner of a theater company; Glendale, Arizona.
WHAT'S NUMBER ONE ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?
I have always wanted to take a trip with my mom to Prince Edward Island, where my favorite book, *Anne of Green Gables,* is set. I can see both of us getting nerdy over Avonlea Village, attending the musical *Anne & Gilbert,* and shopping in Charlottetown. I imagine us enjoying tea for two and being careful not to drink too much raspberry cordial.
WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?
The first time my husband gave me his phone number, he scribbled it on the back of a fast-food receipt. As a joke, he wrote, "Your future husband!" above his number. We just celebrated our 11-year wedding anniversary. I still have that receipt.

I am thankful for my problems, which are small compared to what they could be.
GINGER LANTZ DUTTON,
St. Louis, Missouri

I AM MOST THANKFUL THAT MY CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP IN A TIME OF GREATER ACCEPTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING. MY OLDEST IS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM, AND I'M GRATEFUL EVERY DAY FOR THE INCREASED SUPPORT OF THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. IT'S ENABLED HIM TO RECEIVE ACCOMMODATIONS TO KEEP HIM IN A MAINSTREAM PUBLIC SCHOOL THAT IS PROACTIVE IN REGARD TO EMPATHY, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND BULLYING.
BLOSSOM RUSO
Aptos, California

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How has technology changed your love life?

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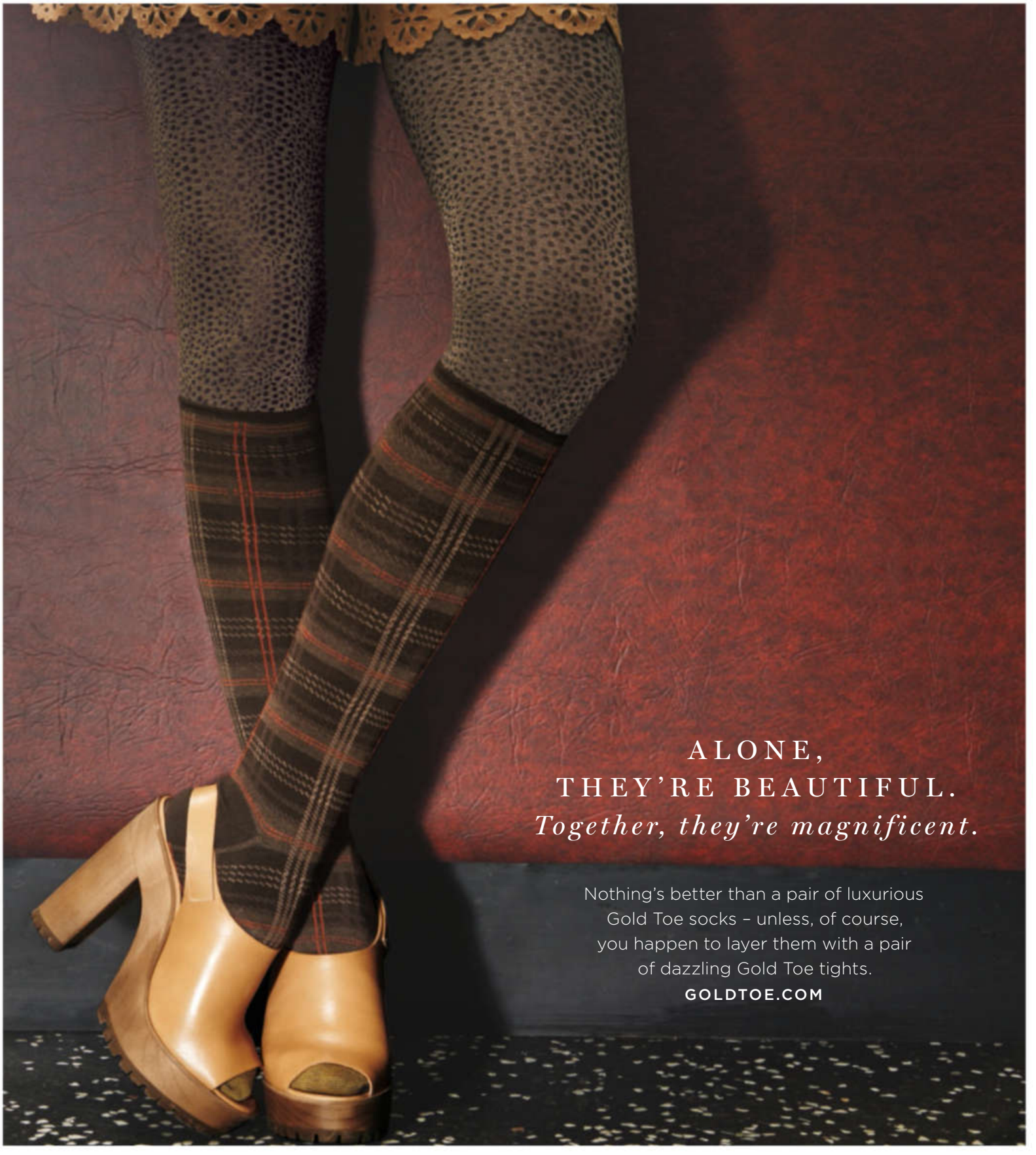

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the Realist

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE FOR MODERN TIMES

1 **LITER** IS THE AVERAGE CAPACITY OF THE HUMAN STOMACH. (SOME EATERS, HOWEVER, MAY HAVE ROOM FOR UP TO FOUR.)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU EAT TOO MUCH

Written by Brandi Broxson
Photograph by Aaron Dyer

ANY IDEA HOW MANY CALORIES the typical American consumes on Thanksgiving Day? Hold on to your hats—or, rather, loosen your belts: 4,500, according to the Calorie Control Council. So how does the body handle that turkey/stuffing/pie assault? As food fills the stomach, hydrochloric acid is released to aid digestion, says Robynne Chutkan, a gastroenterologist and the author of *The Microbiome Solution*. But when there's too much food, the acid gets pushed up the esophagus—hello, heartburn! Once the belly swells to capacity, it begins to press on other organs, which also feel the squeeze. If you've scarfed your meal or washed it down with a fizzy drink, you've swallowed air, making you even more bloated. That's why a hearty burp (excuse you) relieves pressure. And that moment when you just can't take another bite? It's not necessarily evidence of reasonable thinking. It could simply be that leptin, a satiety hormone, has signaled the brain to call it quits. Fatty foods (pass the potatoes au gratin) make the message more urgent. After feasting, you may feel sluggish, but don't sink into the sofa. "Lying down inhibits digestion," says Chutkan. And that's good news. You've got sales to hit up.

PROP STYLING BY JOJO LI; THANKS TO MELISSA ROSEN, M.D., GASTROENTEROLOGIST AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY AND ED LEVINE, M.D., GASTROENTEROLOGIST AT G.I. HEALTH SPECIALISTS.

SMARTPHONE CASE

STAY TUNED FOR MORE CLEVER WINNERS OF OUR 2015 "NEW USES FOR OLD THINGS" CONTEST

All year we're featuring the smartest, most creative ideas straight from *RS* readers like you.

WINNER

SINK CADDY

Because the camera lens hole doubles as a drain, a smartphone case is a great spot to rest a sponge, a bar of soap, or a scrub brush.
—idea from Carol LaGrow, Wurtsboro, New York

RUNNER-UP

TRAVEL JEWELRY TRAY

Throw an old smartphone case in your carry-on and use it to keep baubles or coins in one convenient spot in your hotel room.
—idea from Kimberly Pokalsey, Pendleton, Indiana

RUNNER-UP

DOORKNOB NOTE PAD

A low-tech way to leave a message: Adhere a pad of sticky notes to the case's interior, attach a pen with a string looped through the camera hole, then hang from a knob. Ideal for college students.
—idea from Rosanna LaBonte, Sherborn, Massachusetts

RUNNER-UP

LUGGAGE TAG

For a free bag tag that isn't made of flimsy paper, glue a card with your info to a cell-phone case. Tie it to the suitcase handle with ribbon.
—idea from Olga Reed, Edmond, Oklahoma

Photograph by Aaron Dyer

PROP STYLING BY JOJO LI; ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER OUMANSKI

Leaves have fallen, guests have arrived and it's time to gather 'round a table as inspiring as the season. That's where we come in, with everything you need to set a holiday table that's delightful, unexpected and one-of-a-kind. Like you.

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Now what!?!

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My voice shakes when I give a presentation at work.

C.S., via e-mail

THE FIX: "Vocal cords are sensitive to anxiety," says "Mama Jan" Smith, a celebrity vocal coach based in Atlanta. She suggests doing a warm-up of humming before speaking to a group and opting for room-temperature water before and during the speech. "Cold water can increase tension in the voice," says Smith. "And when the throat gets hot and then is hit with cool inhaled air, it can result in vocal instability." Feel your voice getting unsteady? She suggests this trick: Squeeze your hands into tight fists, hold for 10 seconds, then release. This reroutes inner tension. If all else fails, talk to your doctor about taking a beta-blocker, which can keep adrenaline at bay and calm the nervous system, says David Brendel, M.D., a psychiatrist based in Belmont, Massachusetts.

Written by Brandi Broxson
Illustration by Peter Oumanski

My workout rain jacket doesn't repel water like it used to.

LISA P., via e-mail

THE FIX: Machine wash the jacket, in case dirt is interfering with the water-repellent coating. Use a specialty detergent, such as Tech Wash ($10, nikwax.com), because traditional laundry formulas can leave residue. If this doesn't do the trick, your garment may have "wetted out," says Philip Werner of the backpacker blog SectionHiker.com—meaning it has lost its magic powers and begun absorbing instead of repelling. If that's the case, restore the resistant finish with a wash-in or spray-on waterproofer, such as Nikwax TX Direct ($13, nikwax.com).

I didn't get any sleep, and I don't drink coffee. Help!

ADRIENNE S., via e-mail

THE FIX: As soon as you get up, drink some water, then get outside, says Janet Krone Kennedy, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and the author of *The Good Sleeper.* Hydration helps abate grogginess, and according to an Environmental Health Perspectives study, sunlight boosts mood and curtails the sleep hormone melatonin. (This works even better if you nix the sunglasses for maximum light absorption.) While you're outside, take a 20-minute walk; a University of Georgia study finds that low-intensity exercise can reduce fatigue symptoms by 65 percent. Also, eat within an hour of waking up to help your brain kick into gear. Kennedy suggests lean protein, healthy fats, and good carbs—say, egg and avocado on whole-wheat toast.

HAVE A DISASTER that needs solving? E-mail your problem to askrealsimple@realsimple.com.

THANKS TO MICHAEL BREUS OF THESLEEPDOCTOR.COM; HEIDI DALE ALLEN OF NIKWAX; AND MARTIN SEIF, PH.D., A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST.

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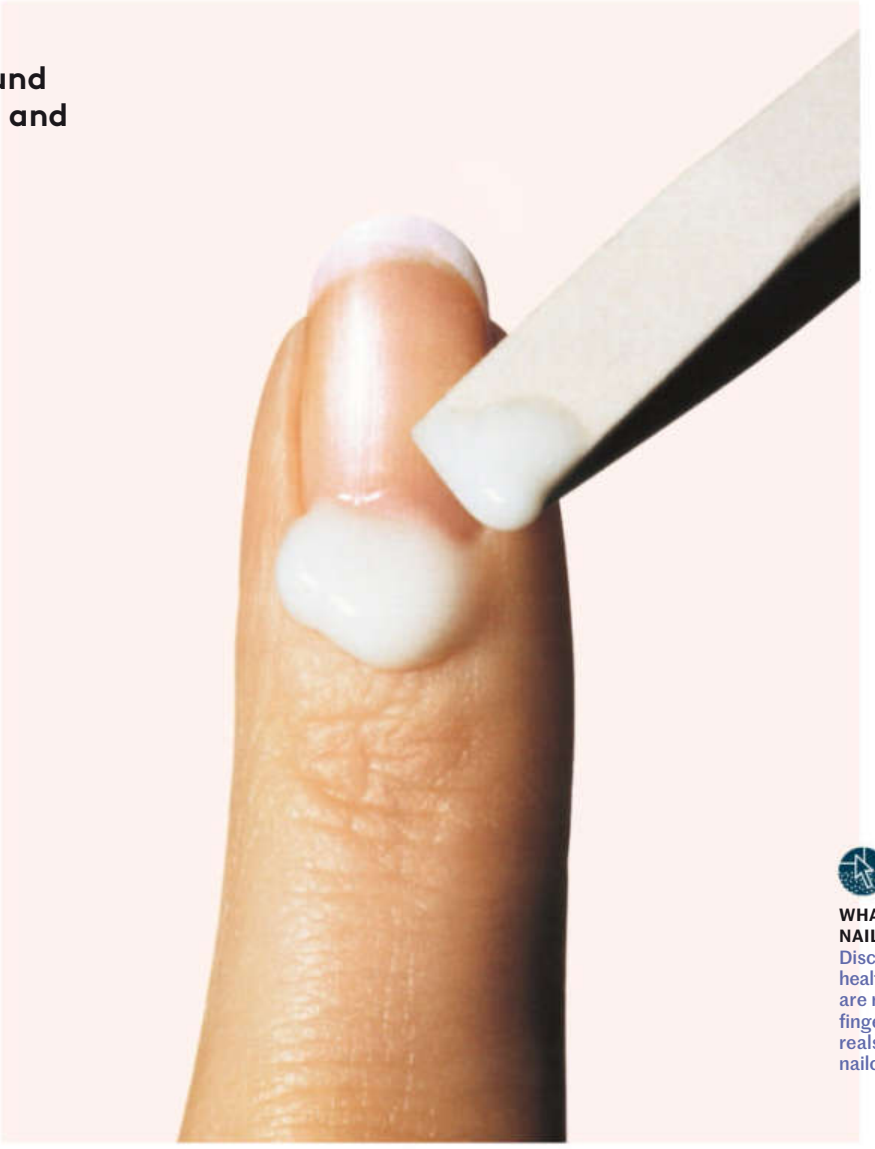
Ragged cuticles

Looking a little rough around the edges? These products and pointers should help.



Know what creates them in the first place.

"The main causes of ragged cuticles are picking, improper cutting, and overexposure to water or harsh chemicals," says Liliana Pennington, the director of education for the nail-care line Londontown. Your first line of defense? A pair of rubber gloves when using detergents of any kind.

Never, ever, cut.

Why is cutting cuticles so bad? Cutting the live skin that surrounds the base of the nail plate, called the eponychium, causes the skin to harden and grow out in an uneven pattern. "This tissue also acts as a barrier against infection and other external elements that want to penetrate the area surrounding the nail," says Amy Wechsler, a dermatologist in New York City.

WHAT DO YOUR NAILS REVEAL? Discover the health clues that are right at your fingertips at realsimple.com/nailclues.

Master the "tuck and trim."

"The only part of the cuticle that is OK to remove is the layer of dead skin that's attached to the nail plate," says Tracylee, the director of manicure services for the John Barrett salons. This can be done by asking your technician to "push back" the cuticles. Or apply a cuticle remover, like Sally Hansen 18K Gold Cuticle Eraser ($7.50 at drugstores), and gently tuck back the skin yourself using a cuticle pusher or an orangewood stick.

"If there is any leftover skin that's visibly hanging off, trim it carefully with a pair of cuticle nippers. But never rip or cut into the living tissue," says Tracylee.

Moisturize better.

Massage a hydrating treatment, like Essie Apricot Cuticle Oil ($8.50, essie.com), directly onto cuticles at least once a day. "Oils penetrate better than creams and help heal dry, damaged areas of skin, which prevents further problems," says Jan Arnold, a cofounder of CND (Creative Nail Design) and its style director.

Written by Jenny Jin

TOP: COURTESY OF TRUNK ARCHIVE; BOTTOM: PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY KINNI

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Recipes by Chris Morocco and Kay Chun
Photograph by Aaron Dyer

3 QUICK IDEAS

RECIPE

Chili, cilantro, and honey relish

HANDS-ON TIME: **10 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **20 MINUTES**
SERVES **4**

Combine 4 jalapeños (stemmed, seeded, and chopped; or include some seeds for extra heat), ½ clove garlic (chopped), and ¾ teaspoon salt. Let sit for 10 minutes to soften. Stir in 2 tablespoons honey. Add ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro. Serve over roasted chicken or vegetables.

EASY UPGRADE

Roasted sweet potatoes with lemon-miso honey

Whisk equal parts honey, white miso, lemon juice, and canola oil in a bowl. Toss sweet potato wedges with ⅔ of the glaze. Roast in the oven at 450° F until tender. Toss with the remaining glaze.

EASY UPGRADE

Honey, Manchego, and salami sandwiches

Mix equal parts honey and softened salted butter. Spread on a baguette and top with sliced salami and Manchego (or some other sharp cheese).

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Making decisions

Find it hard to make up your mind—even about little things, like what to eat? Barry Schwartz, a professor of psychology at Swarthmore College and the author of *The Paradox of Choice*, says the answer is...there's no right answer.

Why is decision-making so agonizing?
There's an explosion of options in all areas of modern life—careers, wireless plans, shampoo.

So we're overwhelmed by choice?
Definitely. Also, people don't really know what they want.

How can we narrow things down?
By focusing on only the factors that are most important to us.

You talk about two types of decision-makers: "maximizers" and "satisficers."
Yes. A maximizer looks at every possible choice to determine the strongest contender. A satisficer goes with "good enough." We found that satisficers are happier with their choices. They also have more free time, since they're not laboring over the alternatives.

Isn't choosing good enough akin to settling?
No. The choice should still fulfill the requirements most important to you.

Walk us through the process for, say, choosing a restaurant.
Narrow down the choices by asking what factors you care about most: "What type of food do I want? What price range? Can I walk there?" Look at no more than six options and pick the one that fits the bill. If more than one fulfills the criteria, go with the first one on the list. Forget about finding "the best"—that's paralyzing. The worst that can happen is that you have a bad meal.

How do you break out of a lifelong maximizer habit?
Maximizers will feel uncomfortable when they attempt to go with good enough. But it will feel more natural the more often you do it. Realize that sometimes there is no right answer. For example, a person can grow into a job even if it's not ideal. It's up to the individual to tailor the career to fit him or her.

Why does making big decisions feel harder?
They're more consequential, and we have less practice making them. But people actually tend to apply the same weight to decisions of where to eat and what toothpaste to buy as to what job to take and where to move.

Does creating a list of pros and cons help?
It works only if you assign weight to each pro and con. But it does get you to list all the factors, which helps you focus on what you ultimately want.

Tell us about "decision fatigue."
Say you call the shots all day at your job. When you get home and your spouse asks about weekend plans, you're going to feel tapped out and evade the question. Decision fatigue also saps self-control. It's tough to resist cake if you've just made a lot of decisions. But when the day has been decision-light, you'll have energy to say no.

What else affects decision-making?
Lack of sleep, being depressed, hunger. A study found judges in Israel were more likely to choose the default verdict of denying parole to prisoners an hour prior to lunch than an hour after.

What is the ideal time of day to make a decision?
In the morning, when you're fresh, fed, and well rested.

How do you feel about intuition?
Often the gut knows more about what you care about than the head does. But you need a balance of gut and head. Sleep on a major decision to give your intuition a chance to respond. Maximizers often revisit choices later on. But that just undermines satisfaction. Once you come to a final decision, put on blinders. Just go with it.

PUTTING OFF A DECISION?
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Written by Yolanda Wikiel
Illustration by Peter Oumanski

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TREND TO TRY

Autumnal orange

Pulling off this sultry tone is as easy as (pumpkin) pie—just pair these picks with neutrals and gem tones already in your closet.

1 **SPICY SHADES**
Burnt orange frames perk up an overcoat on brisk commutes. $89, bcbg.com.

2 **TWIRLY DRESS**
Trench meets pleats to produce a polished silhouette fit for work meetings and fall dinner parties alike. Karen Millen dress, $360, bloomingdales.com.

3 **TOASTY SCARF**
Plush fringed cashmere can warm you up from brunch to bonfire. Bajra scarf, $395, saksfifthavenue.com.

4 **BURNISHED BRIM**
Shade your face at the farmers' market with this spin on the classic fedora. $104, hatattack.com.

5 **PERSIMMON PULLOVER**
An asymmetrical crewneck that will dominate your closet in sweater weather. $80, bananarepublic.com.

6 **ON-POINT FLATS**
Step into orange suede shoes to anchor a navy pantsuit or a gray shift. $119, talbots.com.

Written by
Brandi Broxson

Photographs by
Philip Friedman

SOFT STYLING BY MAI TRAN

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HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Young adult (YA) fiction

Does Ponyboy still have a special place in your heart? Here's how he, Nancy, and Margaret paved the way for Harry, Bella, and Katniss.

"YA speaks to young people about their experiences without the intrusion of adults' perspective," says Veronica Roth, the author of *Divergent.*

1930

The American Library Association (ALA) creates the Young People's Reading Roundtable, along with an annual list suggesting children's and adult novels. (Believe it or not, the Nancy Drew girl-detective series is deemed too popular and doesn't make the list.) "This is the first time that literature is marketed directly to teens," says David Levithan, an author and the editorial director of Scholastic.

1950s

Psychologists Robert James Havighurst and Erik Erikson each write a trailblazing book defining adolescence as a developmental stage when identity independence takes hold. The ALA follows suit by creating a Young Adult Services Division in libraries. "The term 'young adult' doesn't come into general use until 1958, but you can credit the librarians for it," says Elizabeth Bird, the collection development manager of the Evanston Public Library, in Evanston, Illinois.

OVER 15 MILLION THE NUMBER OF COPIES OF *THE OUTSIDERS* THAT HAVE SOLD SINCE ITS DEBUT.

1967

S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*—a plot involving gangs, a robbery, and a killing—kicks off the first golden age of YA lit. "It sparked authors to write novels that were more than just, as Hinton put it, 'a horse and the girl who loved it' story lines,'" says Bird.

"Blume is unafraid to talk about teens accurately. That's why many generations feel a connection to her books," says Levithan.

1970s

The "me" decade continues to keep it real by tackling tough teen issues: Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (bullying) and Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* (a girl's first period) and *Forever* ("going all the way").

Sweet Valley Confidential, a follow-up about the twins as adults, makes the *New York Times* best-seller list in 2011.

1980s

The first major YA franchise is born, and its merchandising potential is milked: Francine Pascal's *Sweet Valley High* series about "perfect size 6" twins spawns a TV show, a board game, and nine book spin-offs, including *Sweet Valley Twins* and *The Unicorn Club.*

1998

The second golden age of YA dawns with J. K. Rowling's boy wizard in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.* A year later, legions of fans camp outside bookstores for up to nine hours to get their hands on the next book in the series. The fantasy genre explodes.

YA books continue to guarantee box-office gold. *Twilight* has earned $351 million since 2008.

2005

Readers sink their teeth into Bella and Edward's world in Stephenie Meyer's vampire romance, *Twilight.* The novel is so successful, says Bird, that its fan fiction (stories inspired by the original) becomes popular in its own right (ahem, *Fifty Shades of Grey*).

2015

Kids are finding the Next Big Thing on their own, says Diane Roback, a children's book editor at *Publishers Weekly.* The newest standout is teen YouTube star Paige McKenzie. Her channel, The Haunting of Sunshine Girl, lands her a major book deal.

All ages start enjoying YA, thanks to the magnetic Potter series, but also because of the more grown-up themes in *Twilight, The Hunger Games, Divergent,* and *The Fault in Our Stars.*

Written by N. Jamiyla Chisholm

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF PENGUIN YOUNG READERS; CHRIS SO/CONTRIBUTOR VIA GETTY IMAGES; WARNER BROTHERS/COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION; AF ARCHIVE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; © DEBROCKE/CORBIS

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Written by Tanya Christian

Photographs by Philip Friedman

Eco quandary

IS A GARBAGE DISPOSAL BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

A garbage disposal uses a lot of water to push waste down the drain, but it turns out that's mostly OK. Like everything that goes down the drain, disposal refuse travels through pipes to a water-treatment facility, which is more energy-efficient than trucking it to a landfill as trash, says Steven Highter, a supervising engineer for Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County.

The most eco-sensitive disposal tactic? Put items that are mostly liquid (such as tomato sauce or a rotten onion) in the disposal, and throw large pieces (whole lettuce leaves, celery stalks) in the trash. Why? "It takes energy to grind up big chunks and to treat the material, but then the residue that is generated goes to a landfill anyway," says David Dzombak, Ph.D., the head of the department of civil and environmental engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh. To keep the disposal running well, don't use it for grease or oil, which can clog.

—KAITLYN PIRIE

SOFT STYLING BY MAI TRAN; ILLUSTRATION BY PETER OUMANSKI

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GOOD READ

The unloved neighbor

When the troubled woman in the apartment upstairs started a lethal fire, writer *Lisa Gornick* found herself without a home—and wondering if a few small kindnesses might have made a difference.

Photograph by Camilla de Maffei

GALLERY STOCK

SHE DIED. We have to start there.

I met Ms. P only once. I'd come upstairs, banging on the door of her apartment because her cigar smoke was permeating my children's rooms. It was not the first time I'd banged on her door, but it was the first time she responded. She answered in a dingy bathrobe, her breasts partially exposed. Despite her long history of alcoholism, there was something regal about her. She had the right to smoke in her apartment, she informed me. It was her home. Yes, but you're impacting my home and my children's health, I said. Could you at least open a window or smoke in a different room?

Something in her eyes softened. I could see that she was obstinate but underneath also reasonable. She would talk with the building's super about sealing the holes that might be allowing her fumes to descend into my apartment.

The holes were sealed, but she continued to smoke, and the smoke continued to find its way into my children's rooms. Three times, we learned from the building super, she had been taken from her apartment in a diabetic coma. We lodged complaints with the building's board, with the management agent. *She drinks, she smokes in bed. She's going to set a fire. She's a danger to us all.*

And then the smoke stopped. Ms. P, now in her 70s, had been placed in a nursing home. Were she to return, we were told, the building's board would require her to have 24-hour home care. I stopped thinking about Ms. P.

Time passed. My older son went to college but came back frequently to play our piano. "I smelled smoke," he reported one day.

"It can't be Ms. P. She's in a nursing home."

A few hours later, we all smelled smoke. This time it was mixed with the scent of burning rubber. "It's her," my husband said. He raced upstairs. I called 911.

She'd returned, but because she was housebound and had taken up e-cigarettes, we had neither seen nor smelled her before that day, when a visitor had brought her cigars. And perhaps because—despite the building's promise—she did *not* have 24-hour home care, no one had mentioned to us that she was back.

Following our neighbors, we fled down the stairs and out onto the street. I seized the arms of our building's board president. "We told you this was going to happen," I said.

Sixty firemen laden with hoses and axes poured into the building. I raced inside to the doormen's cabinet to get the residents list for the fire chief, who then asked me to stay to help check off who had safely exited.

I was still in the lobby when I heard loud voices. Seconds later, two firefighters came out of the elevator dragging a rolled rug between them. "We've got her. She's breathing," one of them yelled.

The rug fell open and there was Ms. P. She was unconscious and naked, save for her old lady's underpants. Wisps of hair barely covered her scalp, and her breasts splayed like enormous jellyfish onto the floor—everything a deathly white white white.

The EMS workers lifted Ms. P onto a stretcher. "She's alcoholic. She probably was drinking. She's diabetic," I said, as they covered her with a sheet and then rushed her to the waiting ambulance.

The chief touched my arm. The firefighters, he told me, had gone through the flames to get Ms. P. They'd carried her down a flight of stairs to the landing below and then into the elevator.

"She's burned on 85 percent of her body," he softly said.

"But her skin was so white."

"That's what burnt skin looks like. Ashen white."

I stared at the rug left behind on the lobby floor. Not until I went to move it out of the way did I realize that it was mine—a rug we kept in the hallway outside our front door. We'd bought it on the edge of the Sahara from a man selling the handiwork of nomadic Berber women: women without permanent homes who take great pride in the rugs they weave for their family's use—ours sold due to a decimating drought. It was Ms. P's last covering, aside from hospital sheets. Other than the firefighters and medical staff, I think I was the last person to see Ms. P alive.

The fire chief took me upstairs to see our apartment. I knew there would be damage, but it was not until I saw the water pouring through the ceilings and pooled on the floors that it hit me that the widowed Ms. P, with no relatives anyone knew of save a nephew in another state, had unintentionally made me her heir. It was as if I'd been plucked from the writer's life I'd been living and bequeathed another life: You will camp out in the front rooms of your apartment while you make enormous piles of wet trash, dry

It hit me that the widowed Ms. P, with no relatives anyone knew of save a nephew in another state, had unintentionally made me her heir.

About the author

Lisa Gornick is the author of the recently released novel *Louisa Meets Bear,* as well as two earlier books: *Tinderbox* and *A Private Sorcery.* She lives in New York City with her husband and two sons.

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Had I seen our lives as connected beyond a ceiling and a floor, our story and this one might have started not with a bang on the door but with an invitation for a cup of tea.

trash, clean, donate, store, move. You will pack up down to the last paper clip and go to a hotel, where your little son will check in with his viola and music stand and you'll cook dinner in a microwave and wash dishes in the bathroom sink. You will move into another hotel with a kitchenette, where you will bring your father, whose cancer won't wait the month it takes to negotiate the lease for a temporary apartment owned by a couple who live in China and, you suspect, have never seen their place—a place where no one knows how to operate the heat or why the dryer leaks and the oven freezes with a flashing light that says "Insert meat probe." You will hire contractors who will demolish your own apartment until it looks like a haunted house while you tell yourself that you are so very lucky to be so well insured, but to get a penny will be like doing your taxes every day, day after day.

On one of your visits to meet with the electrician or mold expert or air-conditioning installer or plasterer or carpenter or tile guy, you will stare at red smears outside your front door, and then you will wash Ms. P's blood off the wall.

In the months since she died, I've learned more about Ms. P than I knew when she was alive. I've learned that in the 60s and 70s she was the manager of a maverick teen star who sang about social issues. I've learned that she was fired due to her alcoholism. What I've really learned, though, has to do with our story together—and how it might have taken a different turn.

I am not the first writer to wonder if novels create a blueprint for the future: My second novel, *Tinderbox,* centers on a family in the wake of a fire as they come to understand their complicity in the disaster. I have no illusion that I could have stopped Ms. P's drinking or her march toward an alcohol-related death. But had I not thought about her solely as the woman whose smoke seeped into our rooms, had she not ceased to exist for me once I no longer smelled her cigars, I might have inquired how she was doing in the nursing home, made it my business to know when she came home and that when she did, it was with adequate care. She might not have died from burns on 85 percent of her body, and my apartment, now nearly a year later, might not still be a construction site.

Had I seen our lives as connected beyond a ceiling and a floor, our story and this one might have started not with a bang on the door but with an invitation for a cup of tea. ■

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Modern Manners

REAL SIMPLE'S ETIQUETTE EXPERT, *CATHERINE NEWMAN,* OFFERS HER BEST ADVICE ON YOUR SOCIAL QUANDARIES.

My foreign-born in-laws are great people but are somewhat lacking in table manners. They will often eat directly from serving utensils. It's gross, not too mention unhygienic. But in their culture, apparently, serving utensils don't exist. How do I discourage this behavior without coming off as an awful daughter-in-law?

J.G.

The issue isn't that they're lacking in table manners. It's that the manners your fab in-laws practice are different from your own. Table manners, like all manners, are culturally specific. What's rude in one place may be valued in another. Burping at the table proved to my Russian grandmother that her stuffed cabbage was delicious and that we were in good health. Your in-laws' culture might value community and sharing over sanitation. Respecting this difference may not mitigate your revulsion, however, and the general expectation is that people from other places adapt to local practices. *(When in Rome...)* I would foist the problem off on your spouse, since the parents are less likely to be offended by their own child, who understands both cultures. But if you want to say something yourself, then avoid patronizing them by using this as an occasion for mutual illumination. "Tell me how food is served where you come from," you might begin. Ideally, the conversation can then segue into a discussion of the role of serving utensils in the place they are dining now.

About Catherine

The author of the parenting memoir *Waiting for Birdy,* Catherine Newman has shared her wisdom on matters ranging from family and friends to happiness and pickling in numerous publications. She gets advice from her husband and two opinionated children in Amherst, Massachusetts.

PORTRAIT BY SARAH MAYCOCK

I have a friend who regularly shows up unannounced with her dog. I am a mother of three small children and have two cats and one dog. My dog is old, and another dog stresses her out. Whenever my friend shows up, I have to lock up my animals and watch my children closely so they don't pull on her dog, who is blind. She tells me not to worry about it, even though I have told her that I remove my animals for the safety of her dog. Another friend recently showed up with her large dog and was offended when I told her we didn't have room in our home. I feel like this is a trend. Can you please give me some guidance?

S.P.

Your menagerie is young, old, and varied in challenging ways. I would go with transparency here, so that these exhausting visits don't sap your remaining energy. Tell the first friend that she can't bring her dog over anymore, apologize for the inconvenience, and clarify that it's not about the safety of her dog but about the stress to your own. Explaining that it's an actual problem for *your* pet, not merely a potential one for hers, cancels out her insistence that she's not concerned. This goes for the other friend as well. Explain that the issue is not space or size but your dog's anxiety level (and your own, if you want to be more completely confessional). If you like, you can suggest an

alternative plan, like meeting at a dog park or going for a walk with the dogs and the kids. Ideally, as a fellow dog owner, she will understand. But if she doesn't, and these new guidelines curtail the troublesome visits? That might not be so bad, either.

I hosted a party, and a guest got red wine all over her white pants due to a cracked wineglass. What should I do now that the party is over?
S.C.

Accidents happen. Like I say to my kids (and try to practice myself): It's not what you do wrong; it's what you do next. Luckily, they're just pants. I assume you've already apologized for the mishap and confirmed the integrity of your other glasses. Next, check in with your guest and see if she's had any luck getting the stain out. (A spray-on product such as Wine Away might help, by the way.) If not, offer to pay her dry-cleaning bill. Assuming that the pants aren't made of mink or alligator, this should be fairly straightforward. And ideally she'll be left not with a burgundy souvenir but with happy memories of your graciousness.

I recently found out that a coworker of mine with a diagnosed mental illness has taken up a holistic lifestyle and is no longer taking her prescribed psychiatric medication. Her behavior is becoming increasingly erratic at work. She's in a high-profile position, and I'm afraid she's going to do or say something that harms not only herself but also our company. Is it OK to tell our supervisor or human resources what's happening? Or is that not an option, since this is a medical choice she's made? Do I just sit back and watch her implode?
K.E.

I shared your question with Karen Godfredsen, a clinical psychologist in Berkeley, California, who recommends action—and compassion—no matter what but has different suggestions, depending on your relationship. If your coworker's medical status is common knowledge or rumor—meaning you heard it anecdotally, as opposed to her confiding in you directly—then address the issue as a quality-of-work problem. Find a time to talk, gently outline a couple of instances of compromised performance, and ask if she needs help getting her work back on track. "I'm worried about you," you might add, without mentioning the treatment choices she's making. If she then mentions her mental health, refer her to HR, who can share wellness resources and offer support. However, if you've been her confidante from the get-go, offer the support yourself. Find a sensitive way to express your concern—directly—about the medication issue. "People off their meds and needing them don't always have the best insight," says Godfredsen. "A trusted person saying, 'Hey, you don't seem like yourself. Are you doing OK off meds?' can be a real blessing." People make bad choices for complicated reasons, or good ones that you can't fully grasp from the outside. Maybe you'll help her figure out which kind she is making.

If you end up buying a pair of small presents for twins, get ones that combine for good play, like different-colored light sabers.

My son received an invitation for a classmate's birthday party. However, the invitation is for twins. One is in my son's class; the other is not. Are we supposed to bring gifts for both? Or only the one he knows?
M.B.

Ideally, the hosts would clarify their expectations, giftwise, on the invitation. But given the absence of instruction, you have a couple of options for celebrating both children (which you should): a single, larger gift for the children to share or a smaller one for each. You could even send a short text or e-mail to ask the parents which they prefer. If they were my kids, I'd pick the former—a great board game, say—since a glut of little stuff is my main pet peeve, and the thought of getting all those origami kits and bug viewers in duplicate makes me want to kill myself. But the parents might have other priorities, such as forestalling the agony of sharing. If you end up buying a pair of small presents, get ones that can combine for good play potential, like different-colored light sabers or a T. rex puppet and a stegosaurus one. While the kids are battling or performing the dinosaurs' extinction, the parents will be thinking of you gratefully (and strategizing a way to get those thank-you notes out in a timely fashion).

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5 ways to handle an awkward conversation

"Well, look at that—I need a refill" doesn't always do the trick. (See No. 1. *They might follow you.*) If you're stuck in painful chitchat, try these tactics for turning things around—or (last resort) making an escape.

Written by Rebecca Webber
Illustration by Shout

1

JEANNE MARTINET

Make a game out of it.

I'll say something like, "Tell me three things about your company, and I'll guess what company it is." Or, "What's that you're drinking? Wait—let me guess." Get people into the spirit. Depending on the party, you might be even more daring. Say, "My friend and I are having a disagreement, so I'm taking a poll. Do you think kissing is cheating?" Small talk should be playful—like a game of tennis, not a job interview. And if you *do* need to get away, say you need to make a phone call. This is a better option than the buffet bye-bye, where you back away to get something to eat, or excusing yourself to go to the bathroom. With a phone call, people won't follow you. It's more believable if you give details. "Oh, my gosh, it's 8:10. I'm so sorry. I forgot to call my husband. I'll be back in a sec." In a crowded party, you're allowed to say you'll be back in a second and not come back—that is, unless you offered to bring the person a drink. Then you have to.

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2

ANNA SALE

Repeat the last thing the person said.

That's very effective, because you're saying, "I've been listening to you. I hear what you've been trying to tell me. Now let's move on to something else." You can then shift to a wildly different place, like "Wait—tell me how your daughter's doing. The last time I saw her, such-and-such was happening." The idea is to give the conversation momentum, so you aren't stuck. You can also do this by gently interrupting when someone is rambling and not making a point. Wait for a break, then sum up their message for them: "What an incredible coincidence. I'm sure that made you feel so connected in your new city." I learned that from NPR's Terry Gross, who told me, "Help your guests sound like their best selves." I've found it works in podcasts and at parties.

3

JENNIFER L. SCOTT

Pause.

Be comfortable with silence. People talk for the sake of talking, but we all know it's better to think before we speak. Everyone has those moments: "What did I just say? Why did I just say that?" Pausing lets you listen, *then* respond—instead of only thinking of what you'll say next (which, honestly, makes the flow more awkward). It's also crucial in difficult situations. I was recently with someone who made an offensive joke, and I started giggling. I wanted to make the other person feel OK. Why? We let our nerves get the best of us and compromise our integrity. Don't fill the silence. Embrace it—or excuse yourself.

4

JILL ISENSTADT

Plan your opening statement.

Often the hardest part of a conversation is starting it. If you're sitting next to someone in silence at a dinner party, it's good to have a standby opener. It can be something as simple as, "How do you know the host?" I work with clients who have social anxiety. Research indicates that people with social anxiety have social skills on par with everyone else; they just feel less comfortable using them. I encourage people to plan some things they can talk about, depending on the situation they're about to enter. Maybe it's sharing a couple of things going on in your life. But you have to practice doing it.

5

SAMUEL BARONDES

Keep the peace.

In social situations, you are going to come across people you admire, some you're indifferent to, and some you find contemptible. Human diversity comes from both genetics and culture, and that's why everybody is somewhat different. Thinking of people this way—recognizing that they identify with a tribe, whether or not it's yours—helps you be less inclined to judge. And know that there's no use trying to convert them to your point of view. When a polarizing issue comes up at a party or a family gathering, let it go. Make this your mantra: It's very interesting to hear your point of view; I have a somewhat different perspective.

THE EXPERTS

JEANNE MARTINET is the author of *The Art of Mingling*. She lives in New York.

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SAMUEL BARONDES is a professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Francisco and the author of *Making Sense of People*. He lives in Sausalito, California.

JENNIFER L. SCOTT writes the blog The Daily Connoisseur and is the author of *Polish Your Poise With Madame Chic*. She lives in Los Angeles.

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15AEBIAK

In yoga, the two sides of the body are associated with different qualities. The left side is associated with introspection and darkness; the right, with heat, light, and activity. A technique called alternate-nostril breathing helps even out naturally occurring imbalances between the two sides and can make you feel healthier and more whole. It's easier than it sounds. Sit up tall. Lightly place the pads of your index fingers on your nose, right finger on the right nostril and left on left. (You can let the heels of your hands rest against each other.) Before you start focusing on the breath, gently stroke your nose and sinus area to remove any facial tension. Then leave your fingers resting lightly on each nostril and exhale completely. With your right finger, press your right nostril closed and inhale only through the left nostril for a slow count of six. Close the left nostril with your left finger and lift your right finger ever so slightly. Exhale through the right nostril for a count of six. Repeat two more times, inhaling left for six and exhaling right for six. Then reverse the exercise, inhaling through the right nostril for six counts and exhaling through the left. Once you get the hang of this, it's pretty soothing. Do three rounds. Don't worry if one of your nostrils feels more open than the other. It's natural for one side to be dominant. (In most of us, this dominance shifts sides every two hours or so.) When you've finished three rounds, take a few normal breaths, then try again, repeating the exercise. Always end your breathwork by sitting quietly and observing the effects.

TRUNK ARCHIVE

THIS MONTH'S EXPERT

CYNDI LEE, the founder of the influential OM yoga Center, in New York City, now teaches yoga worldwide. She is the author of five books, including the memoir *May I Be Happy*. Find her at cyndilee.com.

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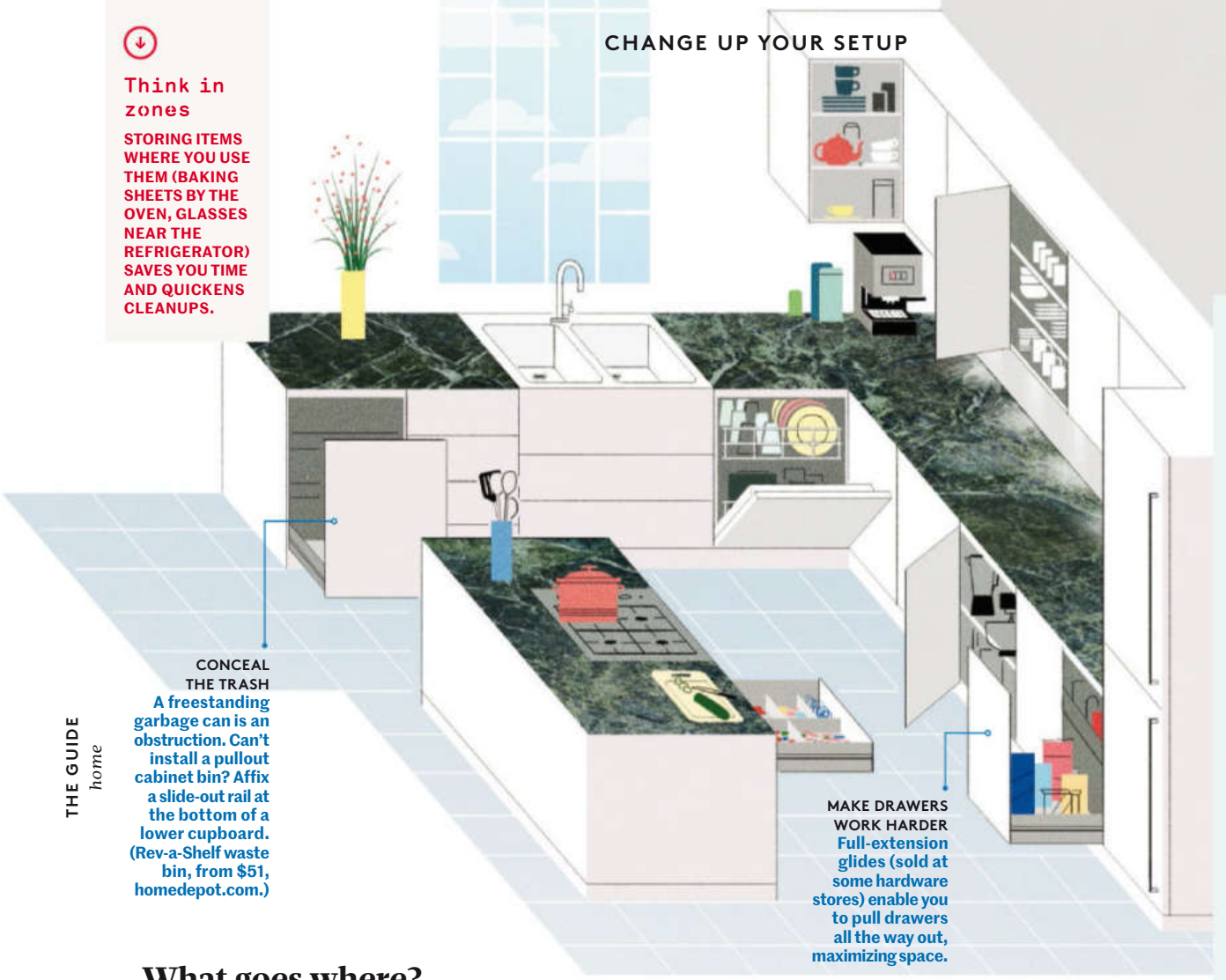
YOUR KITCHEN, ONLY SMARTER

Organizing advice, cooking strategies, refrigerator revelations, and dozens of other pro tips to help your busiest room positively hum with efficiency.

Written by Stephanie Sisco and Virginia Sole-Smith
Illustrations by Michael Kirkham

Think in zones

STORING ITEMS WHERE YOU USE THEM (BAKING SHEETS BY THE OVEN, GLASSES NEAR THE REFRIGERATOR) SAVES YOU TIME AND QUICKENS CLEANUPS.



What goes where?

If your cooking space turns to chaos every time you scramble eggs, a quick reshuffling is in order. These guidelines will point you in the right direction.

1 COOKTOP, REFRIGERATOR, SINK Typically, the ideal layout centers around a work triangle of these three elements, with four to nine feet between each. But this is not a hard-and-fast rule, especially with today's bigger, more open kitchens. "What's more helpful is to set up distinct areas for frequent activities, like making coffee, prepping dinner, and entertaining," says Mary Kathryn Reese, a kitchen-remodeling pro in Dallas.

2 PREP SPACE Aim for two to four feet of room on either side of the sink and the stove, suggests Reese: "You need at least enough to fit a large cutting board." Have a stand mixer or some other bulky appliance in that spot? Move it. If your kitchen lacks counter space, add more surface area with a rolling island.

3 DISHES, GLASSES, POTS AND PANS Shelves stay neater if you divide cabinets into categories. (Everyday plates in one, most-used cookware in another.) Walk yourself through your usual kitchen routine and consider how many steps you're taking from a cabinet to its corresponding task. If a switch-up will shorten the distance, do it, says Reese.

4 TASK LIGHTING Overhead fixtures aren't illuminating enough. Under-cabinet lighting not only makes food prep easier but also adds ambience. "If you can't have an electrician wire it in, try adhering a battery-operated fixture," says Diane Benbow, a kitchen designer in Asheville, North Carolina. (*RS* pick: Utilitech Under-Cabinet LED Light Bar, $14, lowes.com.)

5 JUNK DRAWER It's a clutter-concealing necessity, but because it's not essential for cooking, it shouldn't take up prime real estate, says Reese. Choose a drawer at the room's perimeter that's 15 to 24 inches wide.

The experts

DIANE BENBOW, vice president and kitchen designer at Benbow & Associates, in Asheville, North Carolina.

CARLEY KNOBLOCH, digital lifestyle expert at carleyk.com, in Los Angeles.

JULIE MORGENSTERN, organizing expert and author of *Shed Your Stuff, Change Your Life,* in New York City.

DOUGLAS MOTT, president of RepairClinic.com, in Canton, Michigan.

JILL NOTINI, spokesperson for the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, in Washington, D.C.

MARY KATHRYN REESE, owner of Snappy Kitchens, in Dallas.

BARBARA REICH, organizing expert in New York City and author of *Secrets of an Organized Mom.*

DON SCHAFFNER, PH.D., professor of food science at Rutgers University, in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

MERYL STARR, organizing expert in New York City.

CATHERINE STROHBEHN, PH.D., food-safety specialist at Iowa State University, in Ames.

THE *REAL SIMPLE* HOME EDITORS

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no matter how dirty
DIRTY IS.

NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE, TOUGH MESSES DON'T STAND A CHANCE
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WHEN IT COMES TO CLEAN THERE'S ONLY ONE Mr.

Wet before use. A rinse is required for surfaces that come in direct contact with food. Use as directed.

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STREAMLINE YOUR FOOD STORAGE

Revamp the refrigerator

Storing items in certain spots—and with the ideal gear—will keep food fresher longer.

1 DOOR It's the warmest spot in the refrigerator, so stock it with the least perishable items: mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce, pickles, salad dressings, salsa, jams, and nut butters.

2 TOP SHELF Odd-size items that don't fit elsewhere and that should be chilled but not too cold (like beer and soda) go here. It's also a good out-of-the-way ledge for leftovers. Keep them on the same section of the shelf every time so you remember to use them.

3 MIDDLE SHELF At eye level, this is a smart spot for healthy snacks, like carrots and hummus. Also, eggs fare best here, where the temperature is most moderate.

4 MEAT DRAWER Stashing deli meats and cheeses here prevents cross-contamination with other foods. (Deli meats have been linked to bacteria that cause food-borne illness.) If your refrigerator doesn't have a meat drawer, keep cold cuts on the bottom shelf, which is the coldest.

DON'T NEED A MEAT DRAWER? Turn it into a trove for items you use most, like lunch-box supplies and after-school snacks.

5 BOTTOM SHELF Put raw meats (fresh or thawing) here to keep juices from dripping and contaminating ready-to-eat foods below. Milk can go farther back on the bottom shelf—normally the coldest spot—along with other dairy items, like yogurt.

6 CRISPER DRAWERS Store vegetables in the high-humidity drawer and fruits in the low-humidity one. Keep in mind: Some fruits (apples, avocados, cantaloupes, peaches, pears) emit ethylene gas, which can cause other ethylene-sensitive fruits and vegetables (like broccoli, asparagus, carrots, cucumbers, eggplants, green beans, lettuces, and other greens) to go bad more quickly. Prolong freshness by storing hardy ethylene producers at room temperature until ripe, then transfer them to the refrigerator.

KITCHEN SHORTCUT FROM AN EXPERT CHEF

"Install a speed rail [the aluminum shelving used in bars to hold bottles of liquor] over your stove to keep oil, salt, and pepper nearby when you're cooking." —AMANDA COHEN, CHEF AND OWNER OF DIRT CANDY, IN NEW YORK CITY

Shelf help

DON'T FORGET! YOU CAN ADJUST THE SHELVES, SO YOUR BIG BOTTLE OF COLD-BREW COFFEE DOESN'T HAVE TO LIE ON ITS SIDE.

5 PANTRY SPACE SAVERS

These picks from organizing pros will keep your goods neatly sealed, stacked, and in sight.

SISTEMA KLIP IT CONTAINERS
Use these for pasta, cereal, and other dry foods. "They stack well and have a tighter clasp than most other brands," says Julie Morgenstern.
TO BUY: $30 for a 16-piece set, bedbath andbeyond.com.

SIMPLEHUMAN GROCERY BAG DISPENSER
Get that snarl of bags off the floor with this dispenser mounted on a pantry wall and you'll actually be able to find one when you need it, says Meryl Starr.
TO BUY: $10, simplehuman.com.

LIPPER INTERNATIONAL BAMBOO 2-TIER TURNTABLE
"Pantries often have hard-to-reach corners or deep shelves; a lazy Susan makes the most of the space. This is my go-to because it has two levels for twice the storage room," says Barbara Reich.
TO BUY: $25, amazon.com.

DREAMFARM GRIPET
Not the type to store stuff digitally? Put this note holder on the back of a pantry door to keep grocery lists, coupons, and recipes in order, says Starr.
TO BUY: $25, amazon.com.

DELUXE CANNED FOOD STORAGE RACK
"This is my solution for shelves that are extra-deep or widely spaced. It helps you utilize all of the space and makes canned goods so easy to find and reach," says Reich.
TO BUY: $31, theorganizingstore.com.

THIS WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR A BELLY RUB.

Like you, we at Natural Balance believe every dog has something that makes them unique. Which is why they deserve food made with ingredients such as venison, salmon, duck and sweet potato.

Food with substance *for* dogs with character.™

4 CLEVER KITCHEN HELPERS

From a trash can that vacuums to a thermometer that plays sous chef, these are a digital expert's top cook-space gadgets.

JOSEPH JOSEPH TOTEM KITCHEN BIN
This device makes composting a cinch, says digital-lifestyle pro Carley Knobloch. "It pairs a food-waste caddy, plus odor filter, with recycling bins, all in one sleek vessel on wheels."
TO BUY: $249, josephjoseph.com.

RANGE SMART THERMOMETER
No more hovering over the oven. This thermometer sends temperature readings to an app on your phone, says Knobloch. "Tell it what you're cooking and your desired level of doneness and it will alert you when the food is ready."
TO BUY: $70, supermechanical.com.

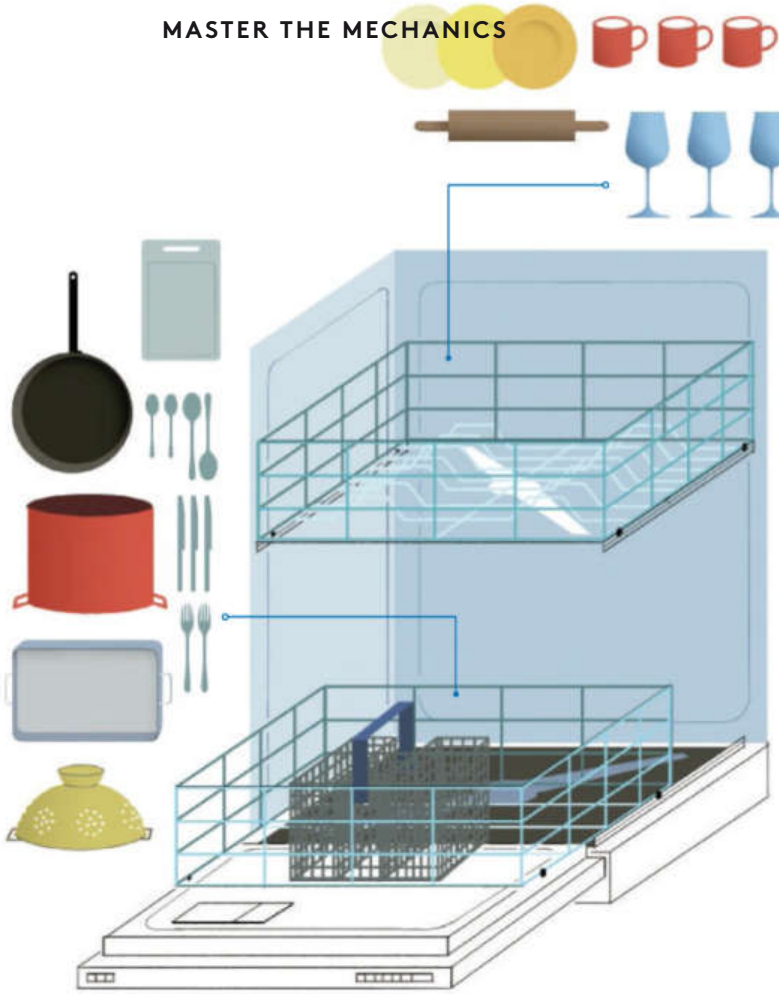
BRUNO SMARTCAN
For speedier cleanups, consider this trash bin with a built-in vacuum. "Sweep debris toward the can and it gets sucked up into the trash bag," says Knobloch.
TO BUY: $249 (preorder for February 2016), brunosmartcan.com.

HIKU GROCERY-LIST MAKER
Scan the barcode on the box of cereal you've finished and this device adds it to a grocery list on your phone. "Or speak into it for barcode-less items, like bananas," says Knobloch.
TO BUY: $49, hiku.us.

Found: a good-looking gel mat!

IN CHIC FAUX SHAGREEN, THIS ERGONOMIC FLOOR COVERING REDUCES LEG AND BACK PRESSURE.
TO BUY: GelPro Elite comfort mat, $120 (20 by 36 inches), gelpro.com.

MASTER THE MECHANICS



WHEN IN DOUBT, TAKE SOMETHING OUT
If pieces are overlapping or keeping the spray arms from spinning, they won't get clean.

Dishwasher do's and don'ts

Fork tines up or down? Plates facing right or left? Two pros cycle through their dish-loading directives.

DO: MAKE A GAME PLAN
"You'll use the space best if you first scan the kitchen and form a loading strategy," says appliance expert Jill Notini.

DON'T: FACE PLATES ALL IN THE SAME DIRECTION
"Place them on the bottom rack facing inward toward the spray arms, with smaller plates in front of large ones, so the spray can reach all of them," says home-repair pro Douglas Mott.

PUT IN BIG PIECES FIRST
It's more efficient to start with those, then fill in with the smaller ones.

DO: ORGANIZE UTENSILS
Sorting by type is a time saver for unloading. Put forks with forks and knives with knives, with handles facing up to avoid getting poked or punctured when you take them out. Spoons will stay dirty if they're "spooning," so insert some with handles facing down (or separate them in a slotted holder).

DON'T: RINSE PLATES. (SCRAPING IS BETTER)
Prerinsing wastes water and isn't necessary if you run the machine within a day. And today's machines can handle food residue, says Notini. One exception is rice: "It's worth rinsing off every grain, because rice can clog the drain hose," says Mott.

DO: RUN THE DISHWASHER AT NIGHT
"Many utility companies charge more at peak usage times," says Mott. "Night is a less demanding time, so this can lower your bills."

DON'T: UNLOAD FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
"A piece on the upper rack may have a pool of water," says Mott. "If you unload the top rack first, the water can spill onto dry dishes below."

KITCHEN SHORTCUT FROM AN EXPERT CHEF

"Line a large mixing bowl with a small trash bag when you're cooking so you don't have to waste time walking back and forth to the garbage." —MICHAEL PSILAKIS, EXECUTIVE CHEF AND OWNER OF MP TAVERNA, IN BROOKLYN

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AT YOUR SERVICE

Want a new look for your dining table? This array of beautiful, affordable linens—napkins, runners, and more—has you covered.

Photograph by Hannah Whitaker

PROP STYLING BY EMILY MULLIN

NAPKINS

Just like pillows dress up a sofa, cloth napkins help a table look polished and pulled-together. Choose a matching set, or mix up a few patterns. A blend is especially pretty paired with white plates.

A HINT OF PRINT Winter Berry napkins in linen, $58 for four, coyuchi.com.

PRETTY PETALS Simple cotton napkins in Coralie Custard, $56 for four, loomdecor.com.

CHOOSE FROM SIX BORDER COLORS AND 29 MONOGRAM FONTS.

PREPPY WITH AN EDGE Typographer's linen dinner napkins with grosgrain-ribbon border, $59 for four, markandgraham.com.

EACH NAPKIN IS A UNIQUE ANTIQUE.

INSTANT HEIRLOOM Assorted vintage French napkins in linen and cotton, $79 for eight, elsiegreen.com.

FRESH PICK Green artichoke napkins in organic cotton, $36 for four, foxyandwinston.com.

SQUARES WITH FLAIR Brush grid napkins in cotton crinkle, $48 for four, nellandmary.com.

HANDCRAFTED SHOWPIECE Palette Swatch napkins in linen, $38 for two, leifshop.com.

RHAPSODY IN BLUE Uno napkins in linen, $7 each, cb2.com.

RETRO DOT Confetti Dot napkins in cotton poplin, $16 for two, serenaandlily.com.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP FRIEDMAN; SOFT STYLING BY MAI TRAN

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TABLE RUNNERS

Stretched across a bare table or layered over a tablecloth, a runner creates a natural break between serving pieces and dinnerware. Bridge the gap by placing a few objects (a small vase, salt and pepper shakers) so they overlap the edge of the runner.

PLUM PERFECT Purple Thistle table runner in cotton, $25 (90 by 16 inches), worldmarket.com.

REFINED RUSTIC La Rochelle table runner in linen, $69 (110 by 18 inches), ballarddesigns.com.

TRADITIONALIST TRIBUTE Marseille print table runner in cotton, $50 (108 by 16 inches), williams-sonoma.com.

LOOKING FOR OVERSIZE OR ONE-OF-A-KIND LINENS? THIS COMPANY TAKES CUSTOM ORDERS, TOO.

WEDGWOOD-ESQUE Anfa table runner in linen, $90 (90 by 14 inches), huddlesonlinens.com.

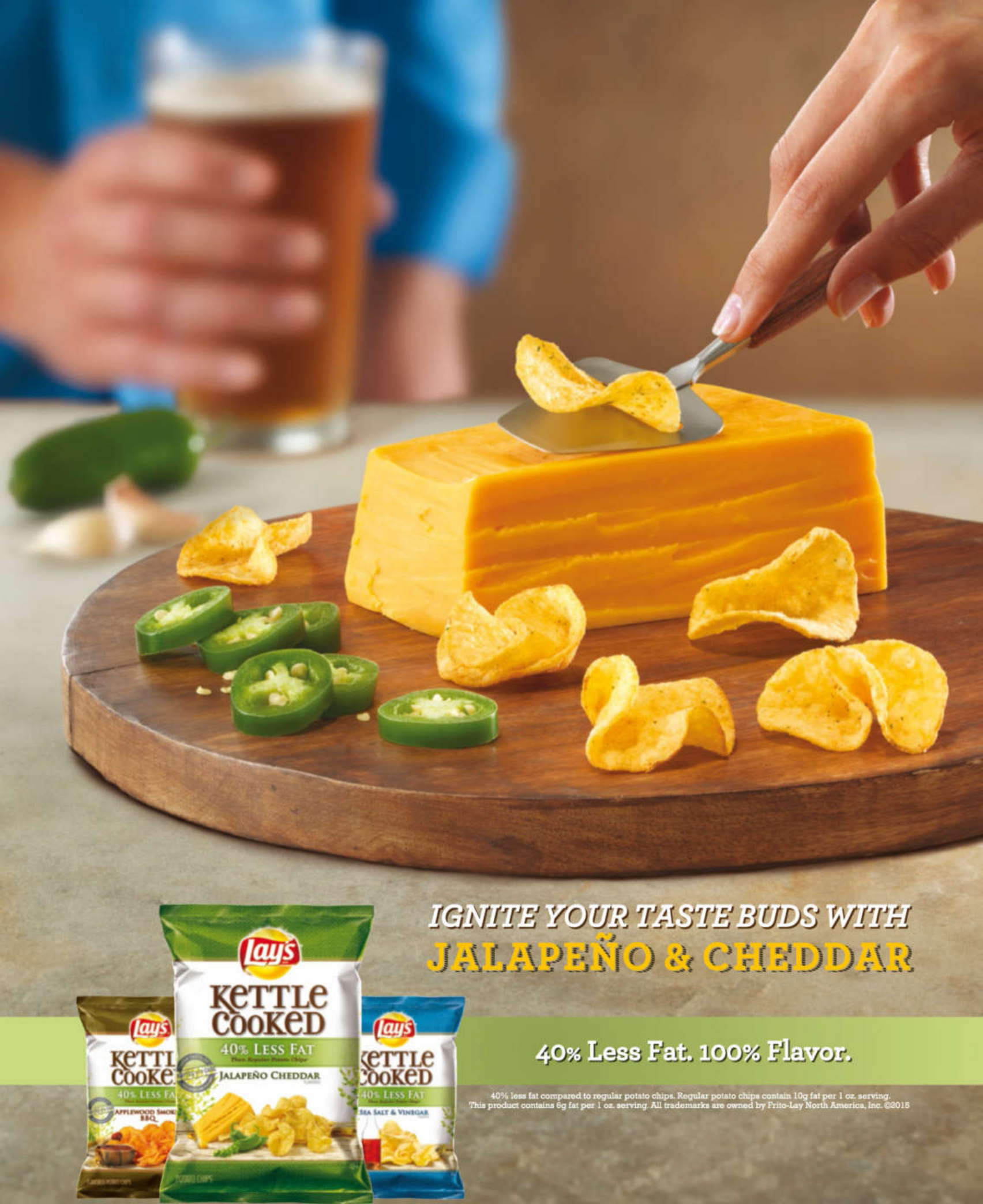
TAILORED AND TIMELESS Stacked Lines table runner in linen, $85 (72 by 10 inches), leifshop.com.

GILTY PLEASURE Embroidered Dot table runner in cotton, $39 (90 by 14 inches), westelm.com.

STRIPE IT RICH Tegan table runner in cotton, $49 (72 by 16 inches), birchlane.com.

INKY ALLURE Shibori Stripes cotton table runner by Flora Poste Studio for Minted, $45 (48 by 16 inches), minted.com.

A POSH TWIST ON PAISLEY Cleo table runner in linen, $60 (90 by 15 inches), sferra.com.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TABLECLOTHS

Decorative details, like a splatter design or a saturated pattern, instantly elevate a table setting. But if your plates or serving pieces are ornate, look for linens with a subtler embellishment, like a lacy border or a raw edge, to keep things balanced.

FOR MORE GREAT FINDS, VISIT THE *REAL SIMPLE* SHOP AT WAYFAIR.COM/REALSIMPLE.

GOING FOR BAROQUE Lucia tablecloth in linen and cotton, $70 (90 by 60 inches), crateandbarrel.com.

AMAZING LACE Grand Lace tablecloth in organic cotton with zigzag-cut lace border, $148 (108 by 70 inches), coyuchi.com.

FLOWERY FLOURISHES CLM Nicole tablecloth in cotton, $45 (60 inches square), wayfair.com/RStablecloth.

GROWN-UP GINGHAM Check tablecloth in cotton, $128 (98 by 56 inches), shopterrain.com.

SOFT SPOTS Charlotte Street cotton tablecloth by Kate Spade New York, $45 (84 by 60 inches), bedbathandbeyond.com.

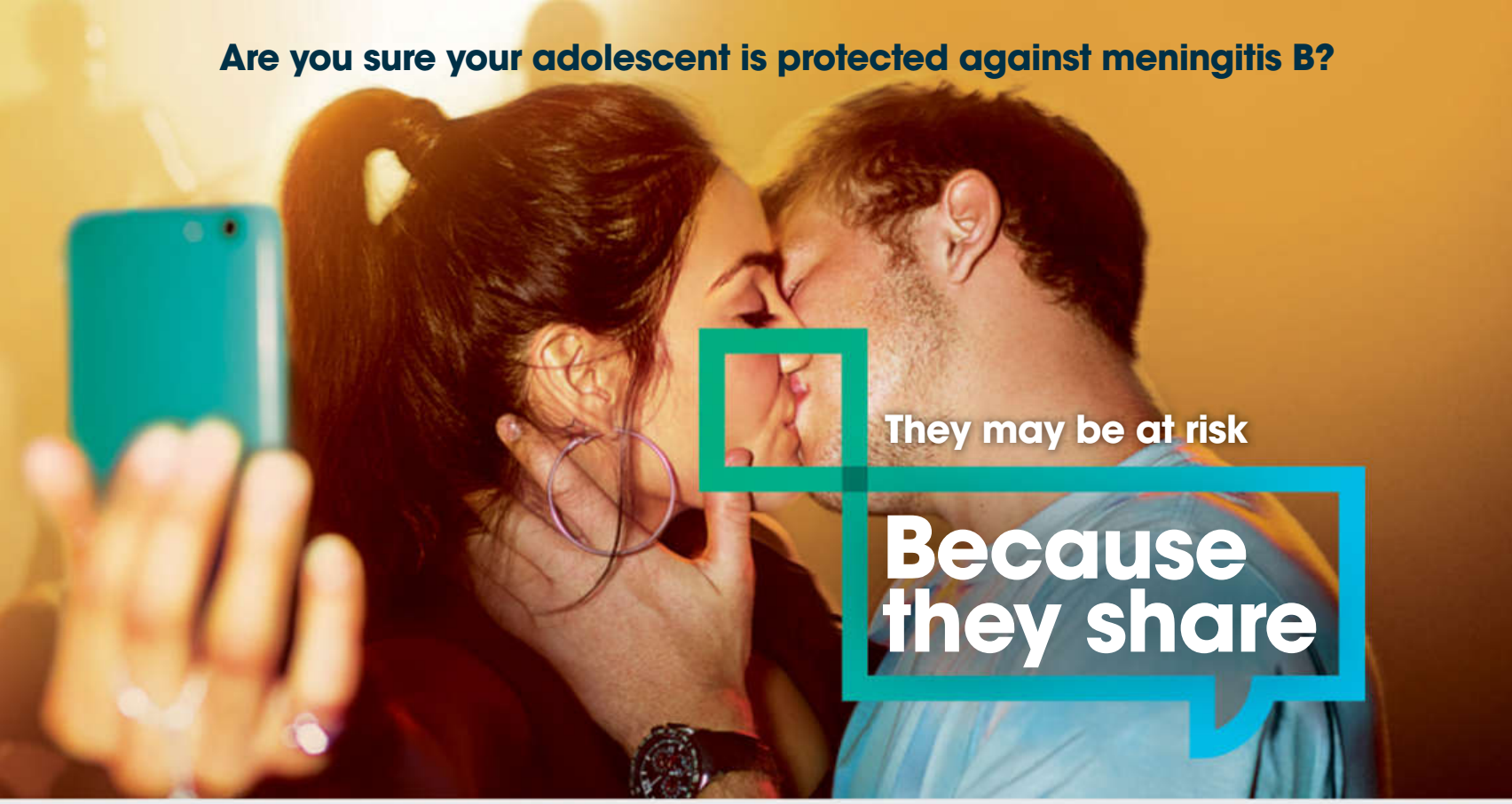
FINE LINES Work linen tablecloth in gray and white stripes by Fog Linen, $64 (51 inches square), shop-foglinen.com.

ARTFUL ACCENT Splash tablecloth in organic cotton, $199 (95 by 55 inches), cleverspaces.com.

BEWITCHINGLY STITCHED Heredia tablecloth in cotton, $128 (120 by 72 inches), anthropologie.com.

LUSH AND LUXE Palm mineral gray printed tablecloth in cotton, $74 (90 by 70 inches), henhouselinens.com.

Are you sure your adolescent is protected against meningitis B?



Meningococcal group B disease (also known as meningitis B) is an uncommon, but deadly, disease. It can lead to death within 24 hours. On average, 1 in 10 adolescents and young adults who develop meningitis B will die from it.

- Meningitis B represents 40% of all meningococcal disease cases in adolescents and young adults in the US

Typical behavior for adolescents and young adults—like kissing, sharing cups and utensils, and engaging in close-contact activities—can lead to increased risk of meningococcal disease.

- Until 2014, there was no vaccination in the US against meningitis B

Talk to your healthcare provider about vaccinating your 10 through 25 year old with TRUMENBA.

INDICATION

- Trumenba is a vaccine indicated for individuals 10 through 25 years of age for active immunization to prevent invasive disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* group B
- Trumenba is approved based upon demonstrated immune response against four group B strains representative of prevalent strains in the US. The effectiveness of Trumenba against diverse group B strains has not been confirmed

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

- Trumenba should not be given to anyone with a history of a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of Trumenba
- Individuals with weakened immune systems may have a reduced immune response
- The most common adverse reactions were pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, and chills
- Data are not available on the safety and effectiveness of using Trumenba and other meningococcal group B vaccines interchangeably to complete the vaccination series
- Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, or plan to become pregnant
- Ask your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of Trumenba. Only a healthcare provider can decide if Trumenba is right for you or your child

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of vaccines to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Visit www.vaers.hhs.gov or call 1-800-822-7967.

Please see Important Facts for TRUMENBA on the following page.
Call 1-844-TRUMENBA (878-6362), 9 AM to 7 PM ET, Monday through Friday, for more information.

For more information, visit KnowTrumenba.com

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Trumenba®
Meningococcal Group B Vaccine

Important Facts

Trumenba®
Meningococcal Group B Vaccine

Trumenba®
Generic Name: Meningococcal Group B Vaccine

WHO SHOULD RECEIVE TRUMENBA® (Meningococcal Group B Vaccine)?

- Trumenba® is a vaccine indicated for individuals 10 through 25 years of age for active immunization to prevent invasive disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* group B
- Trumenba® is approved based upon demonstrated immune response against four group B strains representative of prevalent strains in the US. The effectiveness of Trumenba® against diverse group B strains has not been confirmed

DOSAGE

- Trumenba® is a three dose series (0.5mL each). The second dose is given 2 months after the first dose. The third dose is given 6 months after the first dose

USE OF TRUMENBA® WITH OTHER MENINGOCOCCAL GROUP B VACCINES

- Sufficient data are not available on the safety and effectiveness of using Trumenba® and other meningococcal group B vaccines interchangeably to complete the vaccination series

WHO SHOULD NOT RECEIVE TRUMENBA®?

- Trumenba® should not be given to anyone with a history of a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of Trumenba®

WARNINGS

- Individuals with weakened immune systems may have a reduced immune response

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

- In clinical studies, the most common solicited adverse reactions were pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, and chills

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Safety and effectiveness of Trumenba® have not been established in children <10 years of age. In a clinical study, 90% of infants <12 months of age who were vaccinated with a reduced dosage formulation had a fever
- Caution should be used when Trumenba® is given to a nursing woman. It is not known if Trumenba® is passed into human milk
- Safety and effectiveness of Trumenba® have not been established in adults older than 65 years of age
- Trumenba® is a three dose series (0.5mL each) given according to a 0-, 2-, and 6-month schedule. It is important to complete the three dose series

BEFORE STARTING TRUMENBA®

- Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or nursing
- Ask your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of Trumenba®. Only a healthcare provider can decide if Trumenba® is right for you or your child
- Report any suspected adverse reactions to a healthcare professional

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information. Ask your healthcare provider or your child's healthcare provider for complete product information
- Go to www.TRUMENBA.com or call 1-844-TRUMENBA (878-6362)

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Ask the Organizer

GOT A QUESTION? Submit it at realsimple.com/organizing.

outerwear gone wild

We don't have space for a mudroom. What's the best way to organize hats, gloves, and shoes?

S. A., VIA FACEBOOK

If you have a little bit of wall space just inside the front door, you can use this area as a makeshift mudroom by adding one piece of furniture: a cubby bench (Prepac shoe storage bench, $210, kohls.com). Each family member gets a few cubbies (or a column of them) for storing everyday shoes. Hats and gloves can live there, too, or in totes hung on hooks or wooden pegs above the bench seat. Don't have enough space for this setup? Turn the nearest closet into an entryway zone, adding a smaller set of cubbies or a hanging shoe holder to contain outerwear essentials. You won't want to toss wet footwear in there, though. Instead, place a boot tray by the front door to corral muddy shoes and keep the floor clean.

drawer wars

My bedroom dresser is always a big mess. Any ideas?

M. L. F., VIA FACEBOOK

It's hard to keep drawers neat if you're putting clothing in without much rhyme or reason. Start by giving each drawer a clear category (undergarments, shirts, bottoms). To create more room, move off-season items, like swimsuits or heavy sweaters, to a bin on a top shelf of a closet or some other out-of-the-way spot. If drawer space is still tight, consider transferring other items to the closet (T-shirts and jeans, folded on shelves; workout clothes, grouped together in a bin). It's helpful to give the remaining pieces in the drawers some structure: Use dividers to segment socks, underwear, and bras, and keep tops from, well, toppling by storing them in the EZ Stax, a device made of 20 clear, interlocking zip-up compartments that allows you to pull one out of the stack without messing up the others (EZ Stax, $20, ezstax.com).

trinket trouble

Little items, like paper clips, buttons, coupons, and hair accessories, end up in bowls and dishes in my kitchen and living area. What's a better way to store them?

F. S., VIA FACEBOOK

It's stressful to have to look at clutter scattered around, even when it's contained in small vessels. But if you're naturally a "dropper," the best way to cut down on the chaos is to give all the odds and ends one limited, defined amount of space. Set aside one drawer in your kitchen command center, laundry room, or office to serve as a catchall, and equip it with a multicompartment organizer (Linus Deep Drawer Organizers, from $3.50, containerstore.com). Then, whenever you're holding an item that doesn't have a clear home, put it there. Every month or so, give the drawer a once-over and bring the hair ties upstairs to the bathroom, put the paper clips back in the desk drawer, and toss anything you realistically won't use, such as expired coupons and extra buttons.

Illustration by The Ellaphant in the Room

DECLUTTERING PRO ELLEN MADERE OF OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT, TACKLES YOUR BIGGEST ORGANIZING ISSUES.

PORTRAIT BY SARAH MAYCOCK

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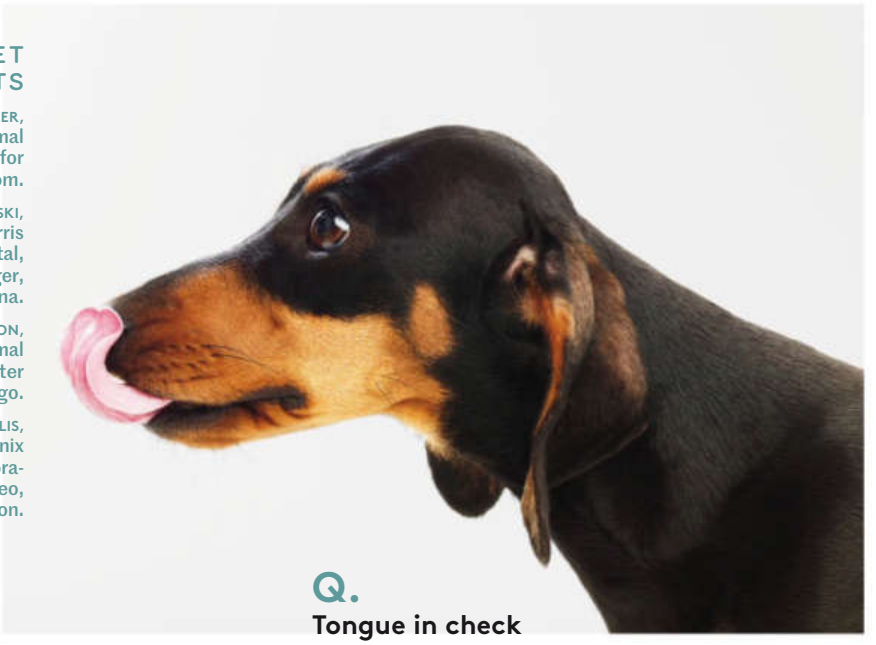
DONNA SOLOMON, D.V.M., Animal Medical Center of Chicago.

SANDY WILLIS, D.V.M., Phoenix Central Laboratory, in Mukilteo, Washington.



Q.

All ears

My cocker spaniel is prone to ear infections, and I hate having to visit the vet almost monthly. Is it OK to use olive oil to ward them off?

A.M., via Facebook

A. Those adorable floppy ears have deep canals that don't dry easily, so many cocker spaniels need a cleaning at least every two weeks. But skip the olive oil—it leaves a residue that can lead to infection. Instead, try a mix of equal parts vinegar and water, says veterinarian Gayle O'Konski. "The vinegar degreases the ear, helps moisture evaporate, and keeps the pH at a healthy level," she says. Apply with a dropper, then massage the outer part of the ear. Your dog will shake some out, and that's OK. Just dab it with a tissue. If the infections persist, your pup may need allergy testing and possibly medication, says veterinarian Donna Solomon: "Allergies make a dog's ears itchy, and the trauma from scratching can spur bacteria and yeast to grow."

Q.

catastrophe

My cat is always jumping up onto high surfaces and knocking things off. Why? And how do we get her to stop?

L.M., via Facebook

A. Put simply, your kitty enjoys the view from the top. "Just like panthers lounge on tree branches, domestic cats have an innate desire to be up high at times," says certified animal trainer Mikkel Becker. "They feel safer when they can view the whole room." You can't modify your cat's instincts, but you can change her perch so she's no longer launching porcelain bowls off the kitchen table. To start, introduce a different climbing spot, like a cat tree or a play tower (Katris Modular Furniture, $59 a shelf, overstock.com). Entice her to hop up on it by leaving treats there, or place her on it and pet her. Part two: Make your counters and tables less fun. For about a week, keep aluminum foil taped to the surfaces (the material startles them), or leave baking sheets filled with water on top (cats don't like to get wet). "When cats have an unpleasant experience, like touching water or foil, they don't typically repeat it," says O'Konski.

Q.

Tongue in check

Any tricks to keep my three-year-old dachshund from constantly licking himself?

J.R.F., via Facebook

A. A little grooming here and there is normal, says veterinarian Sandy Willis, but obsessive licking could be the sign of a health issue, like a skin disease, so your first step should be a vet exam. If your pup is cleared, it's possible the licking stems from separation anxiety or another source of uneasiness. "Some dogs excessively groom when they're stressed," says Solomon. Exercise can help soothe nerves, so stick to a daily routine of at least 30 minutes of "true activity," such as playing fetch, taking a long walk, or using an interactive toy (Outward Hound Lucky Dog Slot Toy, $25, amazon.com). Still catching him licking? Each time, distract him with a new task, suggests Becker. "Command him to retrieve a particular toy, then give him attention and praise," she says. "Repeatedly reinforcing the nonlicking behavior can get him to drop the habit."

Written by
Sarah Grossbart

Photograph by
Pat Doyle

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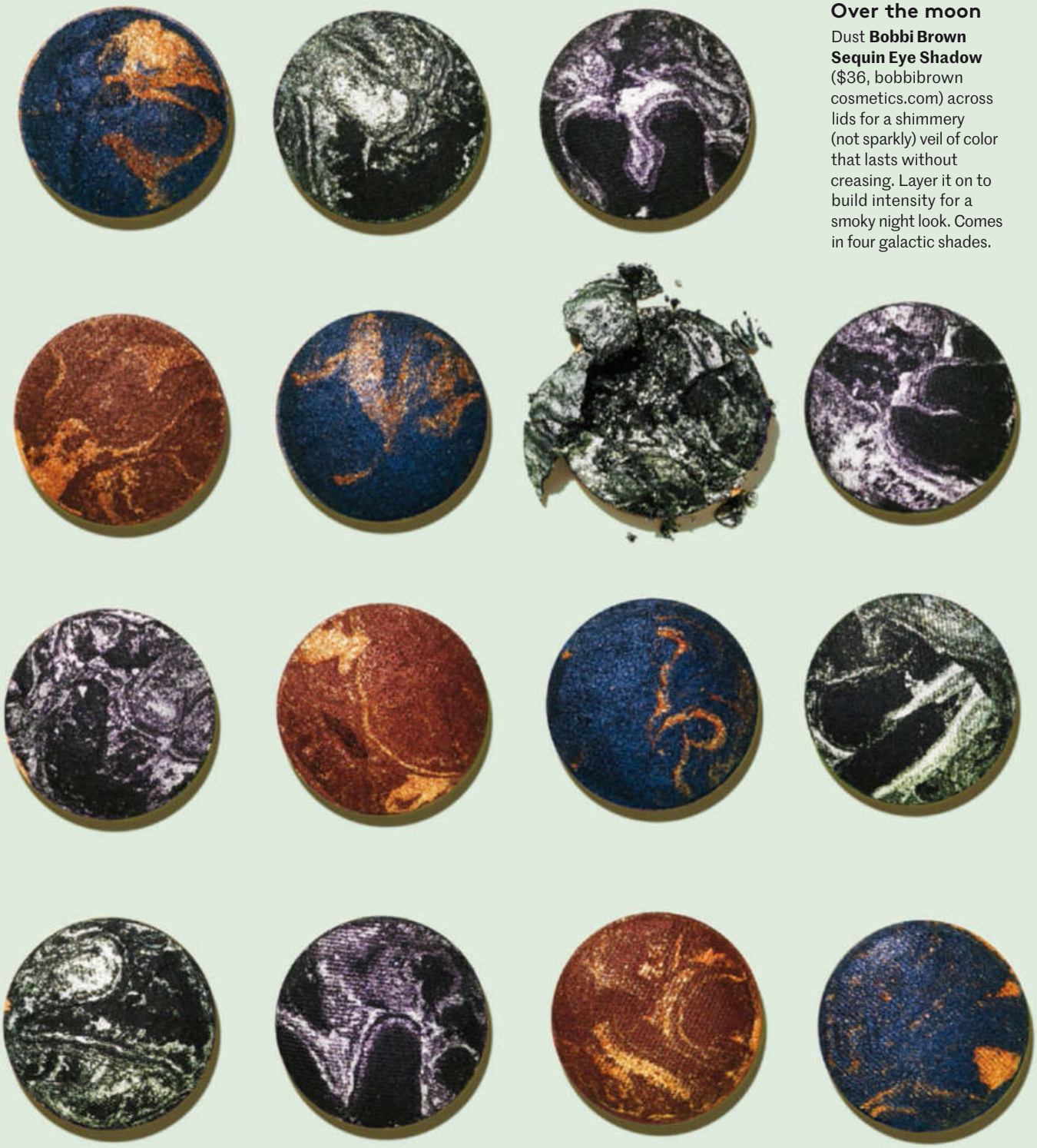

Over the moon
Dust **Bobbi Brown Sequin Eye Shadow** ($36, bobbibrown cosmetics.com) across lids for a shimmery (not sparkly) veil of color that lasts without creasing. Layer it on to build intensity for a smoky night look. Comes in four galactic shades.

PRETTY SMART

The latest beauty products and tips that save time, money, and—best of all—your sanity.

Written by
Heather Muir

Photographs by
Ralph Smith

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAASKO FOR HALLEY RESOURCES INC.

Set the tone

A standout in Sonia Kashuk's new Target skin-care line, **Renew Micro Exfoliating Toner** ($15, target.com) contains willow-bark extract to clear pores and hyaluronic acid to plump lines.

High brow

Thrive Causemetics Infinity Waterproof Brow Liner ($23, thrivecausemetics.com) delivers the staying power of a wax in a pencil. For every liner sold, one is donated to a cancer patient. In two shades.

It's a solid

Stash **Kérastase Elixir Ultime Serum Solide** ($45, kerastase-usa.com) in your travel bag so you can smooth frizz and fly-aways in a TSA-friendly way. The palm-size jar contains a blend of 15 oils.

Double dipper

Bite Beauty Mix N' Mingle ($14, sephora.com) is slimmer than a traditional lipstick but houses two creamy shades so you can switch based on your mood (or layer them). Each bullet is packed with free radical–fighting resveratrol to help prevent and smooth pesky lip lines. In eight duos.

CHEAT SHEETS

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JUST PLAIN FUN.

Monkey business

It's a jungle out there, but this can help. **Tonymoly Magic Food Banana Hand Milk** ($12, urbanoutfitters.com) softens even overwashed hands and smells like—you guessed it—*bananas!*

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THEY'RE A THING: PRESERUMS

Applied after cleansing but before serum and moisturizer, these lightweight concentrates help boost cell turnover, strengthen skin's defenses, and maximize product results. If you're loath to add another step to your routine (we know), try swapping a preserum for moisturizer to get a potent dose of anti-aging benefits.

Face value

Want to give a preserum a try? We like **Shiseido Ultimune Power Infusing Concentrate** ($65, shiseido.com). It targets skin cells responsible for boosting immunity against pollution and UV rays, while Japanese botanicals soothe irritation.

Lord of the ring

Curly-haired girls: Never wrestle with knots again. **Carol's Daughter Combing Creme in Sacred Tiare** ($10, carolsdaughter.com) cuts through tangles like butter with shea and moringa oils and doubles as a leave-in conditioner.

Stain fighter

Discolored nails? Coat them with **Deborah Lippmann Genie in a Bottle Illuminating Nail Tone Perfector** ($20, sephora.com), which contains violet pigments and mica to help brighten tips. It also has biotin to boost growth. High five!

The art of layering

L'Oréal Paris Voluminous Superstar Mascara ($11, drugstore.com) has a dual-end wand to beef up even the wimpiest lashes. First brush on the primer to thicken hairs, then apply the fiber-filled mascara to add noticeable length and lift.

Strike it rich

Tested by Siberian women in the winter, **Clinique Dramatically Different Moisturizing Cream** ($26, clinique.com)—a thicker version of its predecessor—strengthens the skin's barrier so it can defend itself in polar-vortex situations.

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CUSTOM EYES

Master the makeup techniques tailored to your eye shape and you'll be set for the holidays—and every day.

Written by Jenny Jin
Photographs by Ryan Pfluger

WHAT TO DO

STEP 1 Sweep a light shadow across the lid as a base.
STEP 2 Apply a shimmery medium shade from the lash line up to the middle of the lid (where a crease might be).
STEP 3 Define the upper lash line with a dark pencil. Using a shadow in a similar shade, go over the pencil and blend upward.

FOR NIGHT

SWAP THE SHIMMER (IN STEP 2) FOR A DARK MATTE SHADOW. THIS WILL GIVE YOU A SMOKIER LOOK. JUST MAKE SURE TO BLEND AWAY ANY LINES.

PRODUCT RECS

Light, shimmery, and dark shadows: CoverGirl Eye Shadow Quads in Notice Me Nudes, $9 at drugstores.
Liner: Revlon Photoready Kajal Matte Eye Pencil in Matte Espresso, $9 at drugstores.
Blend liner with: IT Cosmetics No-Tug Dual Eyeshadow Brush, $24, it cosmetics.com.

SHAPE No. 1

MONOLID/HOODED

Both have little to no visible crease. Monolids (shown here) have more lid space, while hooded shapes have less lid space but a more pronounced browbone.

HAIR BY PATRICK FERRARA; MAKEUP BY ROBERT GREENE; ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE ELLAPHANT IN THE ROOM

SHAPE No. 2

DOWNTURNED

If you're in this category, the outer corners of your eyes droop slightly. It can be subtle (like the model shown here) or more noticeable (think Katie Holmes).

FOR NIGHT

A FEW INDIVIDUAL LASHES APPLIED TO THE OUTER CORNERS WILL GIVE THE EYES A LIFT.

WHAT TO DO

STEP 1 Apply a pearly shade across the lid, concentrating on the brow bone. This pulls the attention upward.

STEP 2 Sweep a medium matte shade onto the lash line. Then, using a lighter matte shade, tap color onto the outer corner of the crease and blend.

STEP 3 Starting at the inner corner, swipe on a dark liner, extending past the outer corner, flicking the line up and out at the end.

PRODUCT RECS

Pearly shadow: Nars Dual-Intensity Eyeshadow in Andromeda, $29, nars cosmetics.com.
Medium matte shadow: Sephora Collection Colorful Eyeshadow in Cashmere Coat, $12, sephora.com.
Eyeliner: Sonia Kashuk Dramatically Intensifying Kajal, $9, target.com.
Faux lashes: Ardell Duralash Naturals Individual Lashes, $5 at drugstores.

TASTE *never takes a* **HOLIDAY**

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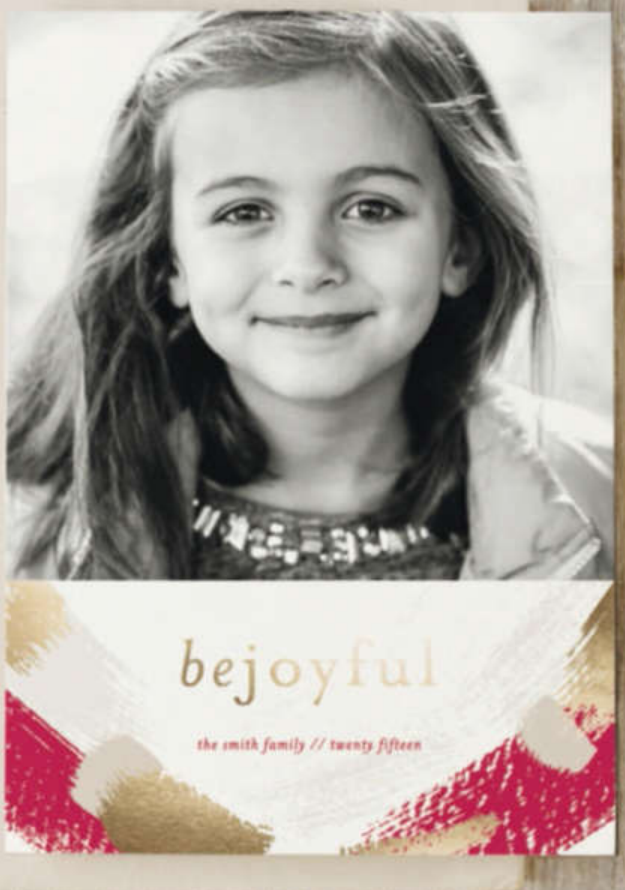

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"Hand Drawn Herringbone" by Cindy Lackey

SHAPE No. 3

ROUND

Ever been told you have big eyes? This is your shape. With more white space around the pupils, you don't need much makeup to look awake.

FOR NIGHT
LOAD TOP AND BOTTOM LASHES WITH MASCARA TO HELP FRAME THE EYES.

WHAT TO DO

STEP 1 Dust the entire lid with a nude shadow to neutralize any shadows or redness.

STEP 2 Using a liquid liner, draw a thin line as close to the lashes as possible. Repeat on bottom, if desired.

STEP 3 Gently drag a flesh-tone pencil across the waterline (the fleshy part of the lower lid that sits between the lashes and the eye) to exaggerate the whites of your eyes and make them appear brighter.

PRODUCT RECS

Nude shadow: NYX Cosmetics Hot Singles Eye Shadow in Lace, $4.50, nyxcosmetics.com.
Liquid liner: Ciaté London Chisel Liner, $19, sephora.com.
Flesh-tone pencil: Tarte Inner Rim Brightener, $20, tarte.com.
Mascara: Maybelline New York The Falsies Push Up Drama Mascara, $9.50 at drugstores.

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SHAPE No. 4

ALMOND

The most common of the bunch, almond eyes are elongated, with slightly upswept outer corners.

FOR NIGHT

ADD A SHIMMERY CHAMPAGNE SHADOW TO THE INNER CORNERS TO MAKE THEM POP.

WHAT TO DO

STEP 1 Sweep on a light shadow from lash line to brow bone.

STEP 2 To add dimension, apply a medium shade along the upper lash line, subtly intensifying the color at the outer corners.

STEP 3 Finish by tightly lining the upper and lower lash lines with a dark pencil.

PRODUCT RECS

Light and medium shadows: Rimmel London Glam' Eyes HD 5-Pan Shadow in Brick Lane, $3 at drugstores. **Liner:** Illamasqua Eye Colouring Pencil in S.O.P.H.I.E., $22, net-a-porter.com.

EVERYDAY EYE WEAPON

No matter your shape, start with a primer, like Urban Decay Eyeshadow Primer Potion ($20, urbandecay.com) to prevent creasing and fading.

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BEAUTY OILS

These slick ingredients work wonders from head to toe. Of 50+ tested, here are picks for every purpose and part.

Written by Jenny Jin

Photographs by Ralph Smith

PROP STYLING BY SARAH GUIDO-LAASKO FOR HALLEY RESOURCES INC.

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TO BUY: $16, burtsbees.com.

2 BEST FOR MATURE SKIN

Korres Black Pine Firming Sleeping Oil

Black-pine oil, the namesake ingredient in this potent night treatment, plumps parched skin with moisture (so lines are less pronounced) and protects against future damage with antioxidants.

TO BUY: $62, sephora.com.

3 BEST FOR NAILS

Ciaté London Marula Cuticle Oil

Brush this conditioning concoction of marula and almond oils over nail beds and cuticles for stronger, healthier tips and to prolong a manicure. "My nails are much less brittle now," said a tester.

TO BUY: $19, sephora.com.

4 BEST FOR HAIR

Nexxus Oil Infinite Nourishing Oil

Use this multitasker as a leave-in conditioner, a frizz tamer, or a shine booster. With six ultra-moisturizing oils, like babassu and buriti, it transforms winter-dried ends into silk.

TO BUY: $18 at drugstores.

5 BEST FOR COMBO SKIN

Jouer Daily Clarifying Treatment Oil

It defies everything you've ever feared about oils: The neem, jojoba, and grapeseed blend is lightweight and pore-clearing and helps to balance sebum, so you're less shiny with continued use.

TO BUY: $48, jouercosmetics.com.

6 BEST FOR BODY

Victoria's Secret Weightless Body Oil

If you hate the feeling of lotion, try an oil instead. This one has coconut milk to soothe skin while it nixes any dry patches. Plus, "it smells exotic, like a tropical island," said one tester.

TO BUY: $18, victoriassecret.com.

7 BEST AROMATHERAPY

Tata Harper Aromatic Bedtime Treatment

Infused with lavender and mandarin essential oils, this small rollerball can be used anytime, anywhere. Apply to pulse points and inhale for an instant calming effect.

TO BUY: $60, tataharperskincare.com.

8 BEST BODY CLEANSER

L'Occitane Almond Shower Oil

Testers described this wash as "liquid gold" because of how it feels on skin (a decadent oil that morphs into a frothy foam) and how it makes skin feel afterward (supersoft, not sticky).

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Janie makes her entrance on opening night.

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THE ESSENTIAL PANTS BUYING GUIDE

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Countless cuts, ever changing trends, and frustrating fits: Pants are far from a "basic" staple. With help from experts, *Real Simple* updates—and uncomplicates—the wardrobe stalwart.

Written by
Jenna Birch
Photographs by
Jens Mortensen

PROP STYLING BY SONIA RENTSCH; SOFT STYLING BY DEULON LESURE. THIS PAGE, PANTS, FROM TOP: J.CREW; WHITE HOUSE | BLACK MARKET; IIKONEE; GAP; SCOTCH & SODA; GAP

PROFESSIONAL & POLISHED

Take charge in sharp tailoring and structured fabrics, particularly those found in menswear suiting, like wool and tweed. As for cuts, go with what you're most comfortable in. Slim trousers are a safe choice, but wide legs are also making a big return to stores this season.

1 BOSS TWEED
You know that black blazer in the back of your closet? Introduce it to these heavyweight pants to create an inexpensive, go-to work look, says stylist Bridgette Raes. Add a white button-down and chunky-heeled pumps.
TO BUY: Zara wide-knit trousers, $70, zara.com.

2 CLEAN AND LEAN
Balance is the word, says Minnie Romanovich, a stylist for Keaton Row. "If pants are pleated and have a slight sheen, make sure the coordinating pieces are sleek and contemporary to create a streamlined look."
TO BUY: Cade satin Essential pants, $590, cade-nyc.com.

3 GREAT STRIDES
When it comes to extra-long wide legs, play with proportion, recommends market editor and brand consultant Randi Packard: "The top should be short and fitted." Then let pointy-toed shoes peek out beneath the hems.
TO BUY: Loft wool trousers, $90, loft.com.

4 GOING GRAY
Treat these tapered slacks as your blank canvas, then layer on some punchy color, says stylist Noelle Cellini. Even in a conservative office, you could pair them with a navy silk blouse and cobalt heels.
TO BUY: AYR wool-blend pants, $185, ayr.com.

READERS' PANTS PROBLEMS, SOLVED

Q. I'm a plus-size woman who is also short. What choices do I have?

A. Stylish pants for petite plus sizes are becoming more and more common. Check out brands like Lane Bryant (lanebryant.com), Simply Be (simplybe.com), and Evans (evansusa.com), all of which offer cuts in various inseam lengths.

Q. Either the crotch hangs low or it produces the "camel toe" effect. What's up?

A. Both issues stem from improper fit, says Cellini. An inseam that doesn't line up with your body, a loose waist, or extra material in the tush can cause sagging in between the legs, and cheap fabric exasperates the dilemma. Women under five-five may have more luck with petite pants, which are sized down proportionately. Camel toe, on the other hand, occurs when the garment is too tight, the fabric is too thin, or the rise is too short for you. Those with long torsos who are over five-eight may want to shop tall styles instead. Fixing this area is a tough alteration, so bottom line, says Cellini: "If the crotch doesn't fit, walk away."

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THE LOOK

BUSINESS CASUAL

Those who work in low-key offices (or really anyone who's constantly on the go) will appreciate these unfussy, ankle-length styles in stretch fabrics that work with heels or flats.

READERS' PANTS PROBLEMS, SOLVED

Q. Rises are baffling. What's right for me?

A. "Your optimal rise is decided by your shape," says Romanovich. If you have a tummy, opt for a mid-rise that cuts across the waist just high enough to evade the dreaded muffin top. Curvier bottoms are best dressed in moderate to high rises, so as to avoid the plumber look or gaping at the waist. If you have an athletic body and minimal curves, you can opt for a low or midrise, she says.

1 GRID LOCKED
Get retro with plaid. Wear a chunky black turtleneck paired with black booties or ballet flats for a look Raes calls "a little bit Audrey Hepburn."
TO BUY: Harrison stretch pants by Ecru, $165, ecrustyle.com.

2 KEEPING CURRENT
Whether you call it wine, mulberry, or burgundy, you'll be seeing this color everywhere. Good thing it's a cinch to match—it complements neutrals, of course, but also teal, mustard, and eggplant.
TO BUY: Raoul skinny pants, $255, raoul.com.

3 VERTICAL INTEGRATION
Dapper stripes nod to menswear, so try these flat-front and slim-leg pants with a black motorcycle jacket and shiny oxfords.
TO BUY: Maison Scotch soft tailored pants, $149, scotch-soda.com.

4 TEAM PLAYER
The possibilities are limitless. Pair them with a silk blouse and flats one day and, as Packard suggests, a striped sweater over a button-down another day. Plus, the side zip won't dig in.
TO BUY: Gap skinny pants, $70, gap.com.

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THE LOOK

DRESSED UP

Say hello to these "party pants"—guaranteed to turn heads with their bright colors, standout patterns, and of-the-moment silhouettes. But have no fear. Partnered with some modern basics, they're surprisingly wearable (and so much warmer than your LBD).

1 NO SLOUCH
With colored silk, you don't have to do much to make an entrance. Just add a black jacket and heels. Don't worry about shiny material revealing every bump—the drapey cut is very forgiving. (*Shhh.* The back of the waistband is elastic, too.)
TO BUY: White House | Black Market Silky Tulip Hem pants, $88, whbm.com.

2 PRETTY GRAPHIC
Go bold with brocade. "Try a lacy white blouse and to-die-for shoes—velvet heels and Mary Janes are big this season," says Packard. Then again, a silk tee and black flats also look great.
TO BUY: J. Crew Maddie jacquard pants, $178, jcrew.com.

3 ON THE EDGE
The trick to pulling off a fashion-forward piece is adding contrast. Think hard with soft, structured with unstructured. That's why a simple, flowy top in a neutral is a natural complement to pleated faux-leather pants.
TO BUY: Banana Republic wide faux-leather pants, $110, bananarepublic.com.

4 FRESH CROP
If culottes seem cute but confusing, you're overthinking. Simply pair these colorful pants with a neutral tee, then layer with a blazer. "Remember that the pants are the star of the show," says Romanovich.
TO BUY: Vince Camuto culottes, $99, nordstrom.com.

READERS' PANTS PROBLEMS, SOLVED

Q. Pockets always gape open and look pouchy. Why?

A. The worst violators are the vertical ones that run along the side seams—they not only flare out awkwardly, particularly if you have curves, but also make said curves appear even wider. Instead, be on the lookout for pockets that tend to remain flatteringly flat—meaning those cut horizontally, diagonally, or curved (like those on jeans). If you want to salvage a popping-pocket pair that you already own, Cellini recommends enlisting a tailor. She'll remove the extra fabric (which fixes that other issue of unsightly bulky linings that show through), then sew the openings shut so the hip area is nice and sleek. In a pinch, you can also use Stitch Witchery or even double-sided tape to keep pocket openings tamped down.

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DRESSED DOWN

You already have an army of cargo and yoga pants populating your closet, so crank it up a notch with some new twists on comfy chic. Velvet jeans, pj-like bottoms, and souped-up leggings are the modern woman's off-duty essentials.

READERS' PANTS PROBLEMS, SOLVED

Q. I have a "bubble butt." How do I find pants that actually fit?

A. If you have a bottom that's bigger in comparison with the rest of your frame, look for a substantial fabric with plenty of give—like ponte or a stretchy wool blend—to avoid puckering and puffiness around your hips. If nothing seems to look right, Romanovich says to find pants that fit nicely in the rear and the upper thighs—even if you have to go up a size—then have them taken in at the waist. Brands to try: Vince (vince.com) and Elie Tahari (elietahari.com).

1 FLEX TIME
You're heard the refrain that leggings are not pants. But this pair, with its thick fabric and refined velvet panels, may single-handedly change minds.
TO BUY: Love suede-front pants by Ecru, $198, ecrustyle.com.

2 RED VELVET
A decadent weekend pick made for cozy knits and rich leathers. And you can't beat the fit: The designers focused on creating cool jeans for over-40 bodies.
TO BUY: Jen7 skinny pants, $175, saksfifthavenue.com.

3 DREAM WEAVER
The ultimate in throw-on-and-go dressing. Pull on these loose, elastic-waist boho pants, then slip into a tee, a jean jacket, and flats. Done!
TO BUY: Loft Vintage Medallion pants, $70, loft.com.

4 LEISURE CLASS
This sweats upgrade can step out of the gym when you add refined pieces, like a thin sweater, delicate jewelry, and slip-on sneakers.
TO BUY: Attention Jogger pants, $25, kmart.com.

SOMETHING
Sweet To delight

SOMETHING
SPICY TO EXCITE

Something
BOLD TO SATISFY

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BODY DECODER

Black pants that *fit*

They're fashion's holy grail—at least for the *Real Simple* reader. Thanks to the experts, the search is officially over.

Theory's fluid wool-blend fabric is virtually wrinkle-resistant.

IF YOU'RE...
TALL

TRY: Theory Custom Max in Edition *(shown)*, $295, theory.com.
Show off those legs with these crisp, flared trousers. "They're what I buy for my tall clients," says Cellini. "When you have long limbs, you can pull off details like high necks, wide lapels, and full sleeves—and these pants can be worn with almost anything."
OTHER OPTIONS: EXPRESS Studio Stretch slim-leg Columnist pants, $70, express.com. BANANA REPUBLIC Jackson Fit lightweight wool trousers, $98, bananarepublic.com.

IF YOU'RE...
PETITE

TRY: NYDJ ankle pants in Casual Stretch, $110, nydj.com.
A trim cropped cut won't overpower a small frame. "And the vertical creases down the front make legs look longer," says Packard. "They also have compression fabric, so they're slimming all over."
OTHER OPTIONS: ANN TAYLOR Kate pants, $98, anntaylor.com. J.CREW Minnie pants, $90, jcrew.com.

IF YOU HAVE...
FULL HIPS AND THIGHS

TRY: White House | Black Market City Knit Ponte Mini Bootcut, $88, whbm.com.
"You want a cut that falls straight down from the widest point of the thigh—this makes curves look less wide," says Raes. The slight bootcut is effortless yet structured.
OTHER OPTIONS: A.L.C. Joseph twill bootcut pants, $495, neimanmarcus.com. ELIE TAHARI Nova stretch pants, $168, elietahari.com.

IF YOU'RE...
PLUS SIZE WITH CURVES

TRY: Lane Bryant Lena tailored stretch wide-leg pants, $60, lanebryant.com.
Wide-leg styles are made for plus-size bodies. "This pair skims curves, nips the waist, and gives that look of the longest legs ever," says blogger Marie Denee. The dramatic silhouette makes even the most basic top look trendy.
OTHER OPTIONS: RALPH LAUREN stretch-cotton skinny pants, $110, ralphlauren.com. SEJOUR curvy-fit pants, $88, nordstrom.com.

IF YOU HAVE A...
TUMMY

TRY: Eileen Fisher stretch straight-leg pants, $168, eileenfisher.com.
A classic straight-leg plays well with your entire closet, and the flat-front design also sits nicely on the waist for extra midsection support. "It's best to avoid pleats and baggy cuts that may draw attention to your midriff," says Romanovich.
OTHER OPTIONS: ALICE + OLIVIA Olivia slim-leg pants, $275, aliceandolivia.com. J.CREW Campbell trousers in bi-stretch cotton, $98, jcrew.com.

THE EXPERTS

NOELLE CELLINI, Chicago-based personal stylist and founder of the Style Academy, an online style school.

MARIE DENEE, blogger at The Curvy Fashionista.

RANDI PACKARD, New York City–based market editor and brand consultant.

BRIDGETTE RAES, New York City–based personal stylist and author of *Style Rx.*

MINNIE ROMANOVICH, stylist for Keaton Row, a personal styling service.

IF YOU'RE...
PLUS SIZE WITH A TUMMY

TRY: Eloquii Kady Fit SRL pants, $80, eloquii.com.
This not-too-fitted skinny hugs in just the right places, smoothing out lumps and bumps through the midsection and thighs. "They are made of a cool material—a thick, scuba-like blend of cotton and polyamide," says Denee. "You can wear them at night with a fun top, or pair them with a suit jacket for work."
OTHER OPTIONS: LANE BRYANT Sophie pants, $70, lanebryant.com. VINCE CAMUTO skinny ankle pants (Plus), $89, nordstrom.com.

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Brain fitness

Forget names, numbers, and words? Can't remember what you were looking for? Don't worry: Despite occasional glitches, your brain may actually be at its peak. Here's how to make it even sharper.

Written by Sally Wadyka
Illustrations by Marina Muun

YOU EAT WELL, rarely veg out in front of the television, and never shy away from a mental challenge. (Six-letter word for a group of performers? *Chorus!*). So why do you find yourself staring into the fridge, unable to remember why you opened the door in the first place? Why do you sometimes mangle sentences and blank at a pivotal moment in a big work presentation?

Brain blips can be unnerving, but here's the good news: They're rarely the sign of a declining mind. Although your child-prodigy days are long gone, your brain is most likely to be at its best during midlife. That's when your life experiences combine with decades' worth of neural connections, resulting in peak intelligence and ability. "We may not learn or recall information quite as quickly as we did in our teens and 20s," says Sandra Bond Chapman, Ph.D.,

the founder and chief director of the Center for BrainHealth at the University of Texas at Dallas. "But during our 30s, 40s, and 50s, we get better at what matters most: making decisions, synthesizing information, and coming up with big ideas."

While your neurons can fire more slowly with age, more often than not stress and anxiety cause you to pathologize perfectly normal experiences, like forgetting an acquaintance's name (again). "You probably pay attention to the few things that go wrong but don't give your brain credit for the thousands of things it did right," says Chapman.

Instead of focusing on the occasional lapse, concentrate on your daily habits, which play a major role in whether you operate optimally today—and whether you develop more serious problems, like dementia, later in life. "Brains are very malleable and can easily be changed, either for better or for worse," says Majid Fotuhi, M.D., Ph.D., a neurologist and the chairman and CEO of the NeuroGrow Brain Fitness Center, a neurology practice in McLean, Virginia. "Factors like stress, anxiety, and poor sleep shrink areas like the hippocampus, which organizes and stores memories. But those same brain regions bounce back with good diet, exercise, and cognitive stimulation." When it comes to brain function, everyday behavior matters as much as—if not more than—your DNA. Here's how to gain a mental edge.

Make mental space

Like a computer hard drive, your brain has plenty of room, but there are only so many tasks it can perform at once before it crashes. Media is the big culprit here: Research shows you're exposed to an average of nearly 10 hours of media every single day. (That's twice as much as people took in during the 1940s.) So even if you're not filling your head with news and random trivia, the mini TV in your office elevator can do the job for you. That takes a toll on your ability to focus and form new memories. "Distractions and interruptions keep longer neural pathways in the brain from developing, so you don't process and store information the way you could," explains Chapman.

To lighten your mental load, limit the time you spend on the Internet to about an hour a day; research shows that that's enough to encourage neural engagement without overtaxing the brain. And instead of reading or responding to a new e-mail within six seconds of its arrival—as a whopping 70 percent of us do, according to one small study—turn your in-box off every hour or two, even if it's for just 10 minutes.

And, yes, you really should make mono-tasking your default state. "Homing in on one task at a time increases essential neural connections instead of destroying them," says Fiona Gupta, M.D., a neurologist at Hackensack University Medical Center, in New Jersey. "That's why one of the first things I recommend to patients who come in because they're worried about mental slips is to quit multitasking."

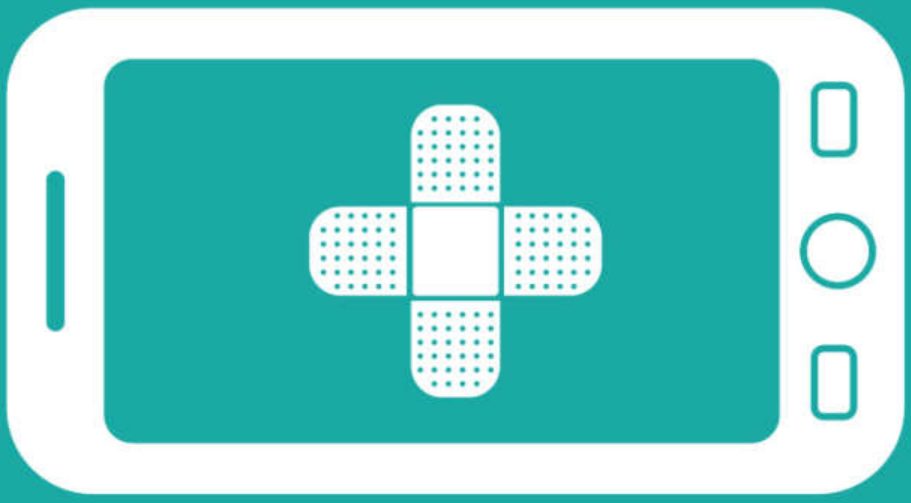
Trying to process too many ideas at the same time is just as problematic as tackling multiple tasks. Daydreaming about an upcoming vacation while you're grocery shopping is fine, but if you're brainstorming a future presentation in the middle of a meeting about something else, you are not only giving short shrift to both projects but also weakening your ability to turn those thoughts into long-term memories, according to a 2014 study from the University of Texas, Austin.

Your better brain plan

Once you've created mental space, these research-backed recommendations will help you improve your attention, memory, and intelligence in less than a month, says Fotuhi.

SWAP OLD STANDARDS FOR NEW SKILLS. Listening to Beethoven and doing sudoku will bolster your brain, right? Not exactly. While they're certainly more stimulating than, say, zoning out to a *Scandal* marathon, new research suggests that a great

GET MORE FACE TIME



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way to boost brainpower is through learning—either mental, such as learning Spanish, or physical, like signing up for a CrossFit class.

According to a 2013 study from the University of Texas at Dallas, older adults who learned cognitively demanding activities, like quilting and digital photography, improved their memories. Those who listened to classical music, watched classic movies, or engaged in social activities, on the other hand, didn't have the same gains. That's because the brain loves novelty. "We build 'brain muscle'—that is, stronger connections in the frontal-lobe regions that control short-term working memory—by engaging in interesting, new tasks," says Gary Small, M.D., director of the University of California, Los Angeles, Longevity Center.

GO DEEP. Take your learning to the next level by using your brain for what it does best: fusing existing and new information. "It will repay you by strengthening its complex neural networks," says Chapman. For example, crack open a Hilary Mantel or Oliver Sacks book—and once you've finished it, spend some time writing a Goodreads review. You might be surprised at what you come up with while mulling it over again. Or reach for a pen and your journal: Studies show that writing by hand, rather than typing, improves information processing as well as the ability to remember what you're writing about.

TWEAK YOUR DIET. A healthy brain diet looks a lot like a healthy body diet. Middle-aged and older adults who adhered to an eating plan called the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet slowed cognitive decline—so much so that they scored the equivalent of 7½ years younger on cognitive tests after a year, according to a 2015 study from Rush University and the Harvard School of Public Health.

Like the Mediterranean diet, the MIND diet emphasizes nuts, beans, whole grains, poultry, and olive oil. But unlike the former plan, it calls for consuming leafy greens daily and at least two weekly servings of berries, as both are rich in brain-benefiting antioxidants. (No surprise, people on the MIND diet limited red meat, butter, margarine, cheese, pastries and other sweets, and fried and fast food, too.) An added benefit? The MIND diet includes a daily glass of wine, because the researchers believe that small amounts of alcohol may have protective properties. (But save a second glass for special occasions only: Excess alcohol kills brain cells—literally—and increases cellular inflammation, upping your odds of dementia.)

WORK OUT—ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU NEED TO BE EXTRA SHARP. It's not news that exercise is good for your head. But researchers continue to learn more about what, when, and how much activity you need to maintain a mental advantage. Good news for couch potatoes: Previously sedentary adults who did an average of just 15 minutes of aerobic activity (like walking) five days a week experienced a significant improvement in their cognitive test scores, according to a 2015 study from the University of Kansas Medical Center, in Kansas City. If you're already active, "keep at it—and ideally push yourself a little farther than you're used to, at least once in a while," says Jeffrey Burns, M.D., a codirector of the University of Kansas's Alzheimer's Disease Center and the lead author of the study.

Working out on days when you have, say, a big presentation or test is key. Adults who did aerobic exercise regularly for four weeks—and exercised the morning that they took memory tests—scored higher than did regular exercisers who skipped their workout on test day, according to a 2012 study from Dartmouth College. Exercise's stress-thwarting effects may be partially responsible: "Stress is toxic to the brain," says Chapman. "It releases the hormone cortisol onto the hippocampus, where memories are stored." That can

When should you worry?

"There's a saying among neurologists and psychiatrists: 'Forgetting your keys is normal; forgetting how to use them isn't,' " says Gary Small, M.D. If you find yourself doing things that are out of character or you have mental slips (like blanking on where you're going while you're driving) most days, rather than once in a while, see your doctor. The same advice applies if you feel mentally fuzzy and experience regular problems with balance or coordination.

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make you momentarily forgetful and may weaken neural connections over time, increasing the odds of dementia.

PRIORITIZE SLEEP. Short-change your sleep for just one night and it can take several nights of solid slumber to return to your sparkling, coherent self. "The brain processes information and consolidates ideas while you sleep," says Chapman. "And most of that appears to happen between the sixth and eighth hours." Hence the importance of a full night's sleep.

If you have trouble falling asleep, consult a doctor before turning to sleep aids. Prescription sleeping pills, although safe for occasional use, contain active ingredients that can slow down brain waves, making you feel groggy the next day. Over-the-counter (OTC) sleep medications are dicey, too. Most contain diphenhydramine, an ingredient that's been linked to short-term cognitive impairment (i.e., that hungover feeling). Worse yet, people who used the OTC medications regularly for several years were at an increased risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease later in life, according to a 2015 study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. See a sleep specialist if you spend as much time counting sheep as you do dreaming.

Do brain-boosting supplements work?

Type "nootropics" into a search engine and you'll get a plethora of hits for sites selling over-the-counter supplements that are claimed to enhance memory and supercharge focus. Many of the compounds in these supplements may sound familiar—for example, caffeine, L-theanine (found in green tea), and creatine (the bodybuilding staple). But that doesn't make them safe, warns neurologist Fiona Gupta: "There is no good science supporting nootropics, and they're not approved or regulated by the Food and Drug Administration."

The one supplement you may want to consider? Vitamin D. Older adults with low blood levels of vitamin D experienced accelerated declines in memory and thought processes, according to a study just published in *JAMA Neurology*. Ask your doctor to run a blood test to check your D levels, and to recommend a supplement dose that's safe for you.

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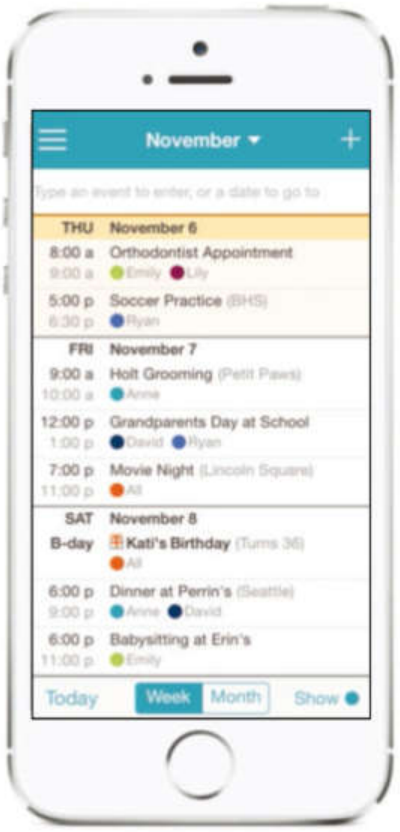

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Dermatologist **Dr. Flor Mayoral** believes in "empowering people with the tools to manage their skincare." Here, her simple checklist will help you identify most common skin concerns and find the clinically proven formula to help.

Diagnostic Checklist

Check all that apply:

- ☐ 1. Itchy Skin
- ☐ 2. Sensitive Skin
- ☐ 3. Dry, Flaky Skin
- ☐ 4. Irritated Red Patches
- ☐ 5. Eczema Flare-ups

"Being able to identify different skin needs, AND the right products to address them, is one of the easiest ways to achieve healthy looking skin."

—DR. FLOR MAYORAL, MD

If you checked the following boxes on the previous page, you'll welcome these skincare suggestions:

☑ 1. ITCHY SKIN

Cold weather, low humidity, excessive bathing and strong soaps can leave skin irritated.

To comfort skin that's dry and itchy, try **Eucerin Skin Calming Creme**. The natural oatmeal and emollient-rich formula soothes skin and provides 24-hour moisturization.

☑ 2. SENSITIVE SKIN

When you have sensitive skin, it can be unpredictable and challenging to identify the cause.

Deep and gentle moisturizing creams are perfect for the driest and most sensitive skin. **Eucerin Original Healing Creme** protects skin from moisture loss. This formula relieves dry skin associated with psoriasis and won't clog pores.

☑ 3. DRY, FLAKY SKIN

Chemicals, weather, sunlight, and detergents can all leave skin rough and flaky.

Use a lotion like **Eucerin Intensive Repair**, which doesn't just moisturize skin, but repairs it with a unique triple-action formula that gently exfoliates, hydrates for 24 hours, and fortifies skin, leaving it looking healthy and radiant.

☑ 4. IRRITATED RED PATCHES

While the exact cause is unknown, when you suffer from eczema, it's hard to imagine a day without scratching.

Eucerin Eczema Relief Body Creme's unique steroid-free formula is clinically proven to fortify dry, itchy, eczema-prone skin. With daily use, **4 out of 5 children** remained flare-up free for up to **6 months**.

☑ 5. ECZEMA FLARE-UPS

For sudden eczema outbreaks, try **Eczema Relief Flare-Up Treatment**, which instantly calms, soothes, and relieves minor skin irritation and itching due to eczema flare-ups.

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SKIN SCIENCE THAT SHOWS

OVERHEAD TRICEPS EXTENSION

What it is

The overhead triceps extension may just be the secret to great-looking arms, says Anthony Carey, a certified strength and conditioning specialist in San Diego, who created this routine for *Real Simple.* By strengthening the three muscle parts that put the "tri" in triceps, this move dejiggles the backs of the arms and balances out the curves of the biceps. Because the move stabilizes the elbow and shoulder joints, it also makes pushing and pulling during everyday tasks easier and supports the upper body during workouts such as yoga.

Muscles trained

The lateral, medial, and long heads of the triceps muscle.

BODY CHECK

① Start with a light weight. Even if you've worked your triceps in the past, this exercise elongates the muscles, which can contribute to more post-workout soreness than you might expect.

② Keep your shoulders relaxed and unshrugged to make the move more effective and avoid unnecessary strain on your neck and shoulders.

③ Control the weight as it descends toward your shoulder, so you're not "bouncing" up from the bottom of the move.

④ At the top of the move, don't point the back end of the dumbbell toward the ceiling. Instead, the dumbbell handle should be parallel to the floor.

How to do it

STAND with a three- to five-pound weight in your right hand. (If you have back trouble, do this move while sitting on a secure chair or a weight bench.)

TIGHTEN your abdominals and lift your chest without arching your lower back.

RAISE your right hand directly above your right shoulder. Your palm should face your body, and the handle of the dumbbell should be parallel to the floor.

STABILIZE your right arm with your left hand by lightly touching your elbow. Keep this position throughout the entire move.

BEND your elbow in a controlled motion and lower the dumbbell toward the back of your right shoulder. As you move, keep your elbow facing forward and your upper arm straight up and down.

STRIVE to get the handle of the dumbbell perpendicular to the floor as your elbow reaches a 90-degree angle. This is the bottom of the movement.

RETURN to the extended overhead position by slowly pressing the weight upward. End with the handle parallel to the floor.

REPEAT for a total of 10 to 12 repetitions, then lower the weight back to the starting position and switch sides. Complete three sets with each arm. Do this move two to three times a week. (If you don't feel a little tired during the second set, your weight is too light; add another two to five pounds.)

Written by Kimberly Dawn Neumann

Photograph by Henry Leutwyler

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Lindsay is the author behind the healthy-living blog **theleangreenbean.com**, where she shares healthy recipes, nutrition tips, workouts, and more! She is a new mom to an energetic 10-month-old baby boy who keeps her on her toes. She and her husband recently opened a CrossFit gym where they spend a lot of their free time.

Lindsay is from Columbus, Ohio, and specializes in nutrition communications for HealthyAperture.com and TheRecipeRedux.com. The Lean Green Bean is her outlet and passion, and her goal is to show her readers that healthy living doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. She believes that life should be balanced, simple, and real—and she strives to show how she lives each day to the fullest possible. She uses her knowledge of all things healthy to educate and inspire the world.

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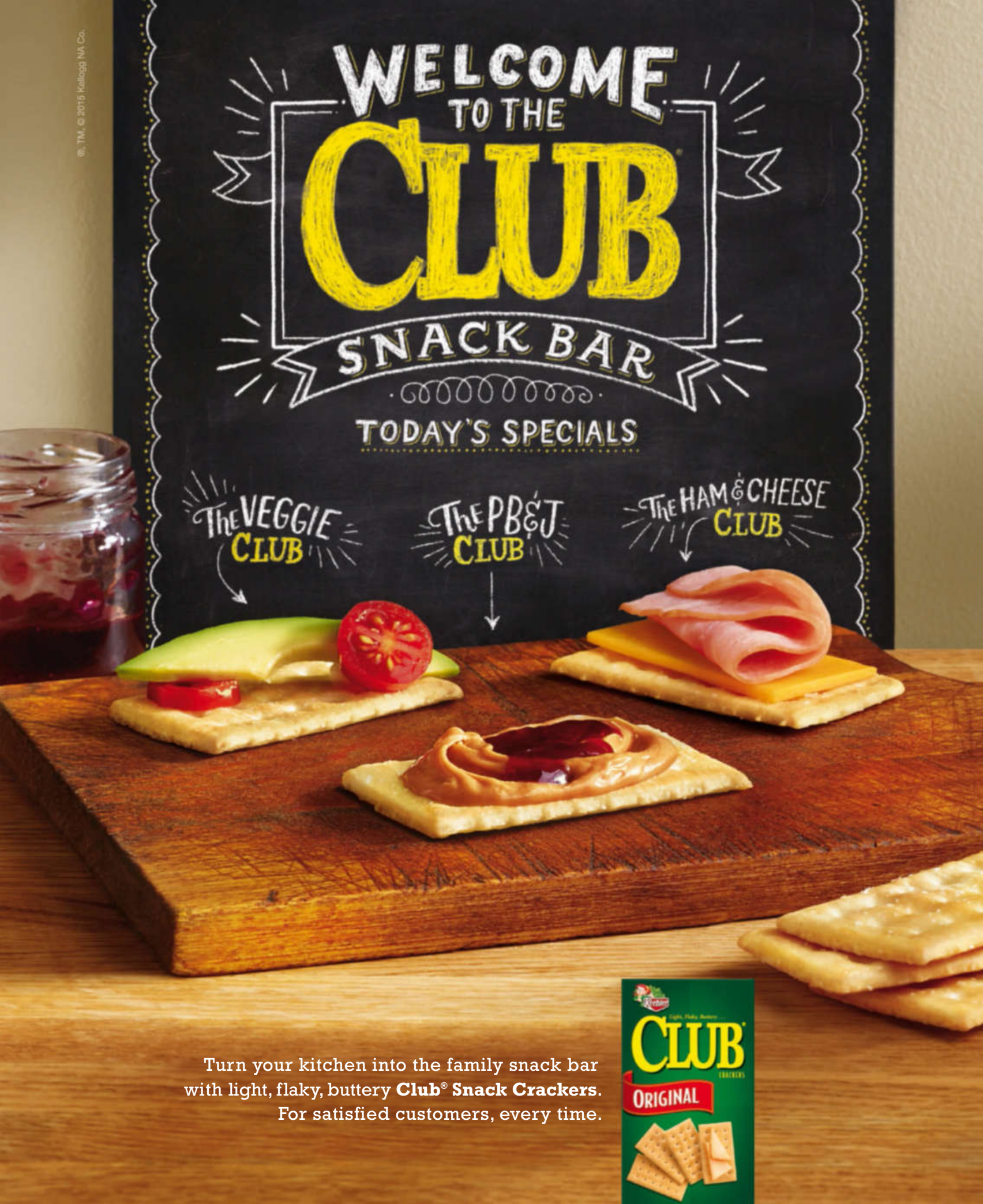

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Dealing with estrangement

It's more common than you may think. Not-close siblings slowly drift apart. Or a huge family feud turns into a frost. Here's how to close the gap before it's too late—and initiate contact when it's time.

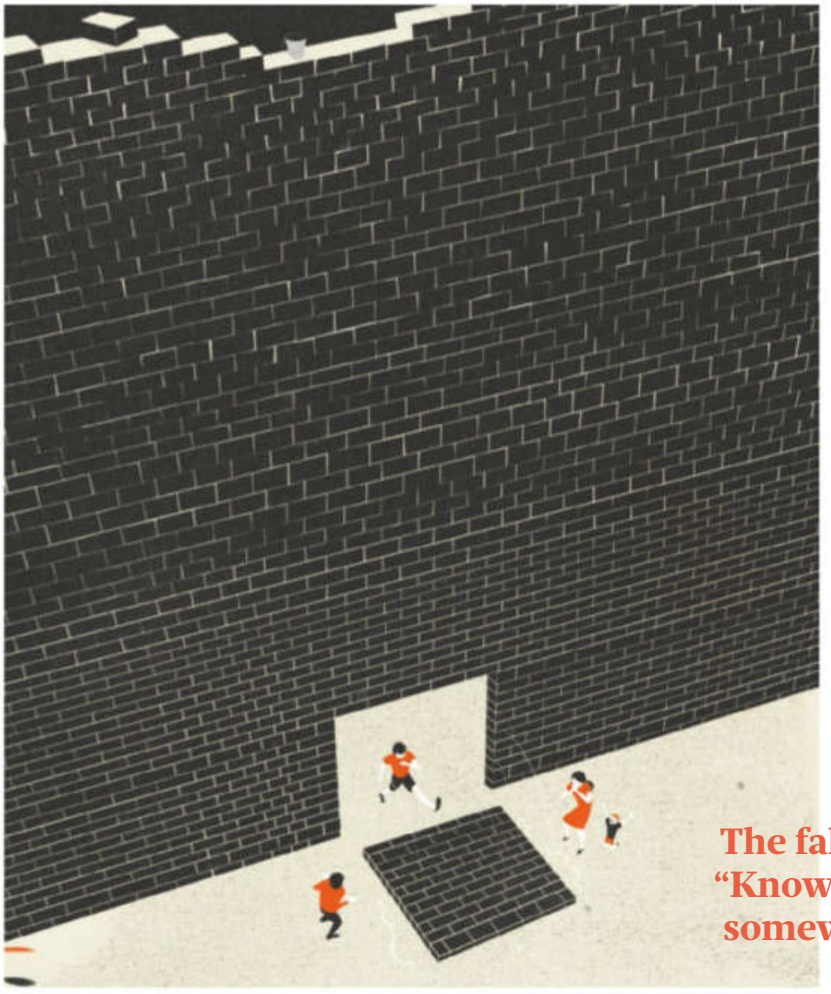
BIG OR SMALL, near or far, dinner every Sunday or holidays only, your family is something you can count on. But sometimes those family ties start to unravel—or suddenly snap. When does that qualify as estrangement, exactly? Therapists define it as such: contact cut off in a way that's upsetting to the one left behind, rather than a mutual parting. "Some people get to the point where closing the door completely seems to them like the best option," says Sheila Heen, who teaches negotiation at Harvard Law School and is the coauthor of *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most.* It's not always dramatic (gifts returned unopened!). Many people experience a lesser—but still painful—distancing. *(She doesn't really visit anymore.)* And those who have dealt with estrangement are often too ashamed to talk about it. "It's a silent epidemic," says Joshua Coleman, Ph.D., a psychologist in San Francisco and the author of *When Parents Hurt.* So, just in time for the holidays, experts offer advice on reaching out or, even better, preventing the break in the first place.

Written by Jennifer King Lindley
Illustrations by Francesco Bongiorni

Why it happens

A big blowup is usually "the last scene in a long drama," says Mark Sichel, a psychotherapist in New York City and the author of *Healing From Family Rifts.* Resentments can simmer for decades: a forgotten birthday here, an unpaid loan there. "Blowups can lead to estrangement in families where communication was never strong anyway," says Tina Gilbertson, a counselor in Portland, Oregon, and the author of *Constructive Wallowing.* "Estrangement is an alternative to talking things through. 'I just won't call you. Then you'll *know* I'm mad at you.'" Rifts are also triggered by "entrances and exits" in a family, says Sichel—like a daughter marrying someone of a different religion—which can challenge long-held values and cause an upheaval in alliances. Coleman says that the majority of estrangements he sees in his practice involve a divorce. "A child might ally with one parent over the other, and remarriage introduces more people to compete for love and attention," he says. Plus, divorce sends the signal that relationships are not necessarily forever.

For those who think, *I'm good. None of this applies to my family,* keep reading: Geographic separation—one sister in Boston, the other in Seattle—plus crazy schedules can often equal estrangement. One sibling calls more. The other lets family maintenance fall to the bottom of an endless to-do list—then it drops off completely. And the fallout can be worse than a death. "When there's a death, there are rituals that make it real and help the grieving process," says Avidan Milevsky, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. "Knowing the person is still out there somewhere means there's no closure." A study published in *Journal of Family Psychology* found that grandparents who had been cut off from a set of grandchildren in this way experienced higher levels of depression than did those with intact connections. Even for family members who initiate the breach, emotional cutoff can be difficult and guilt may haunt them. "The people I see are miserable about their decision to cut off contact," says Gilbertson. "This is a loss for them, too. It's not free."

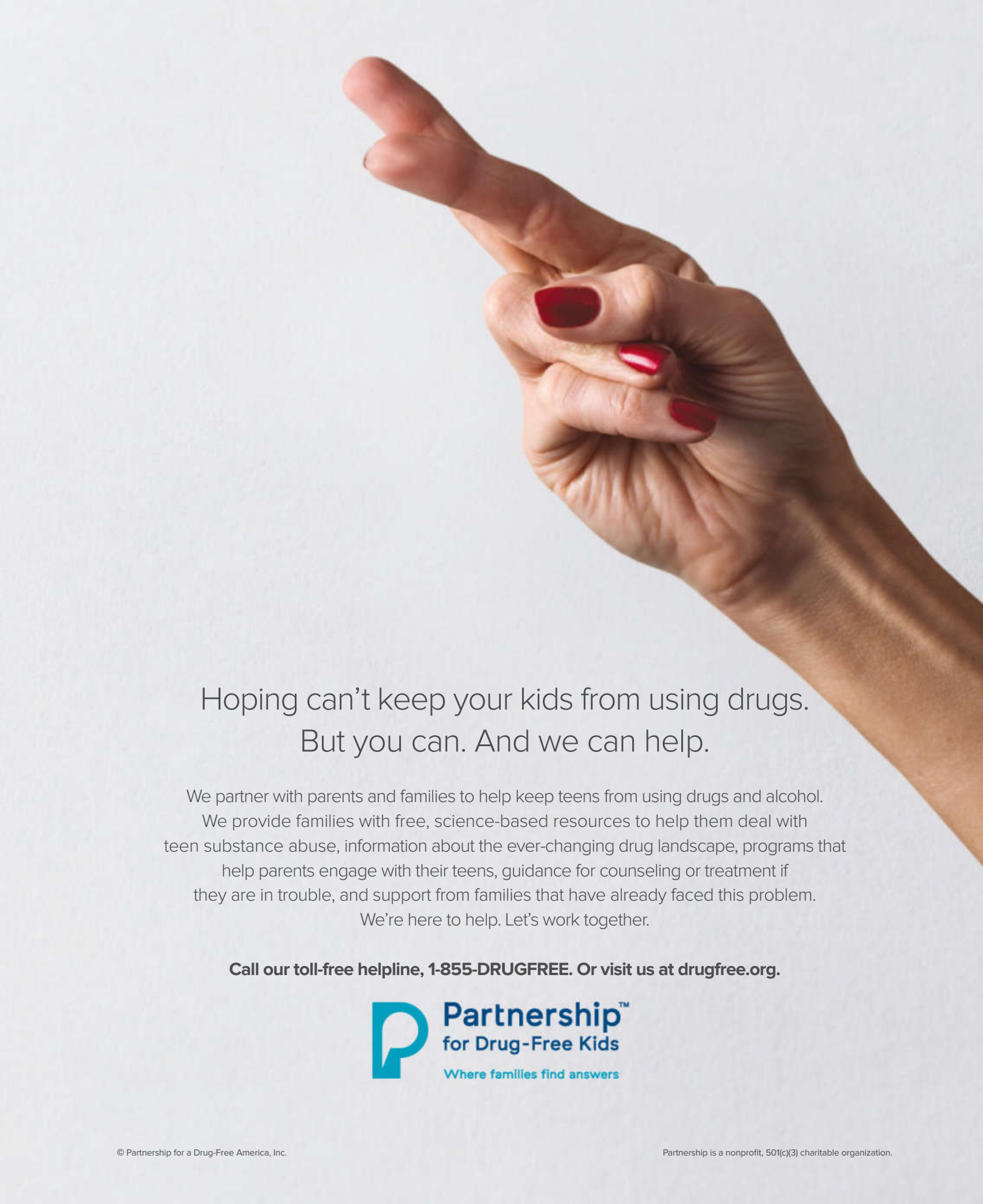


Ways to prevent it

First things first: "In cases of emotional or physical abuse or dysfunction, cutting off contact completely could be a very healthy response," says Kylie Agllias, a social-work academic at the University of Newcastle, in Australia, who has studied the issue extensively. Addiction, sexual abuse, or violent behavior may make it truly dangerous for you (and your kids) to be around a family member.

Otherwise, before you put up a wall, try these tactics. (These are

The fallout can be worse than a death. "Knowing the person is still out there somewhere means there's no closure."



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largely for the potential estranger, as the estrangee may not be at the same level of desperation.)

Talk before it's too late. "Have the hard conversation when you still have a feeling that things can be fixed," says Coleman. Present your concerns in positive terms. Tell the person what you value about him or her, then say, "I would love to have a better relationship. So I have to let you know you do some things that are making it hard for me to be with you." Then tell the other person specifically what you need if the relationship is to survive—a heartfelt apology for not coming to your wedding or an end to criticism about your spouse. If you're on the other end of this conversation, keep in mind: "Perspectives on the same event can be radically different," says Coleman. This isn't the time to engage in a debate: Don't counter with "You are not remembering all the times I supported you!" Instead, listen for what Coleman calls "the kernel of truth" *(I understand how that made you feel criticized)* and take responsibility.

Resort to e-mail if necessary. If you simply can't be in the same room with the person without losing it, keep one line of communication open. Even a thin thread of contact (text or e-mail) makes it easier to pick back up in the future if you have a change of heart. You won't have years of silence to overcome.

Take a sabbatical. "I often encourage my clients to do something called temporary disengagement," says Milevsky. "Don't say, 'I never want to see you again.' Say instead, 'I'm taking time off.'" This can be a good move after an emotionally charged event, like the death of a parent, when tempers are flaring. Give yourself, say, three months to cool off, then see if the situation looks different.

Even after years, take heart that your loved one might naturally come back at big milestones in life.

Mending fences

IF YOU'VE BEEN ESTRANGED FOR A SHORT TIME (LESS THAN A YEAR)...

Act as if nothing has happened. You missed your niece's graduation, and your sister hasn't spoken to you since. If you know she has always been the kind to retreat to the kitchen rather than hash out a disagreement, the best tactic might be to just forget about it. "For some people, the last thing they want to talk about is the conflict that started the feud. That's why they're avoiding you in the first place," says Heen. Instead, try calling her and asking if she wants to do something you've both enjoyed in the past. (Antiquing, anyone?) Adds Sichel, "Agree to an amnesty. 'Let's start over and not talk about past issues that can't be resolved.'"

Skip the long letter. It's tempting to pen a lengthy letter, laying out your side to persuade the other person exactly why they're wrong to be mad at you. Don't. There's a risk your interpretation is different, "and even if you are factually correct, what the person is upset about isn't facts," says Heen. "Also, now that they've heard all you have to say, there's no incentive to reach out." A better tack here is to send a short note with as "yes-able" a request as possible, she says. For example: "I've really missed you and feel so sad to not have you in my life. Would you have coffee with me at our favorite bakery next week?" Then follow up and discuss next steps when you meet. Often we end a big moment with no idea what to do next, says Heen. Suggest a game plan for moving forward. "I'd like to call you next week and check in."

IF YOU'VE BEEN ESTRANGED FOR A LONG TIME (MULTIPLE YEARS)...

Keep reaching out. "A lot of people don't stay in the game long enough," says Coleman, who recommends that his clients continue contacting the person who has shut them out for a few years before throwing in the towel. Try to guess what method your loved one might find least intrusive—texts, letters, e-mails—then send a lighthearted message on a regular basis, every few months. "She might be feeling guilty after keeping her distance for such a long time. This sends the signal that you're still alive and happy and open," says Coleman.

Don't stalk on social media. Do you really want to discover that you have a new grandchild via Facebook? Even if you look, don't "like." The person might feel as if she's being spied on, says Sichel, and that might push her away for good.

Leave the door open a crack. Even after years, take heart that your loved one might naturally come back at big milestones in life. "These things can have their own timetable," says Sichel. A brother who had no use for you while busy with his own family may find himself divorced and suddenly yearning for a familiar connection. A grown son may want his baby to have grandparents. One low-pressure way is regularly sending those classics: birthday and holiday cards. (If you fear they will put them in the recycling bin unopened, Gilbertson

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suggests not including a return address, to pique their curiosity.)

Make fun of yourself. If you do achieve a tearful reunion, it can still be a little awkward. Some gentle humor can act as a relief valve if you find the old tension building, says Heen. So you fall into bad habits and make fun of your sister's weight again? Say, "Whoops! I blew it! I guess I won't be invited to the reunion now!" Don't be afraid to state directly, "I'm nervous about this, but I'm so happy we're back together," says Gilbertson.

When there's no happy ending

Sometimes reconciliation isn't possible, and you're left to make peace with the loss. "You're talking about a real grief and not just about the person who's gone," says Paul Coleman, a psychotherapist and the author of *Finding Peace When Your Heart Is in Pieces*. "You may also be grieving what you never got from the relationship—love, approval, attention."

Often those who have been cut off by a loved one react with anger, telling themselves, "I'm better off without her!" But, says Coleman, "underneath the anger, there's usually sadness. You need to acknowledge, 'I'm sad because this is a genuine loss.' Otherwise your feelings will remain stuck." (Websites like estrangedstories.com offer a supportive forum.) Permanent estrangements can be cloaked in shame and stigma. What do you say when a new friend asks how many children you have or how you are spending the holidays? Consider carefully whether you need to retreat, says Agllias: You might find that "when people decide to talk to others about this, they're often shocked and relieved to discover they're not alone."

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Your mother and sister refuse to speak to each other and you're dreading another Thanksgiving-table cold war. Should you play peacemaker? No—and, well, sort of.

It's really their problem. Even with the best intentions, you'll probably get caught in the crossfire, with each assuming that you're acting in cahoots with the other side. "It's up to them to decide how they want to handle their relationship—well or poorly," says author Sheila Heen. "It's up to you to decide how to handle your relationship with each of them. Let go of responsibility to fix their issues."

But you can use a few tricks. Feeling brave? Try the classic mediator's tactic of telling each one something positive you heard about her from the other. In a nonchalant way, mention to your mother that your sister always thought that she was the best cook; tell your sister that your mother always brags about what a good parent she is. "This can help change their negative thinking about each other, making it more likely they might be willing to come together," says psychologist Avidan Milevsky. "You can also let them know how much it would mean to you if they would agree to at least meet." It's up to them to take it from there.

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Do kids really need homework?

If you are the parent of a school-age child, you definitely have some feelings on the topic. It's too much! It's stressful! No, it's essential! It teaches time management! So who's right? Well, in a sense, everyone. (Sorry, trick question.) Here's a primer on the debate.

1

Homework isn't necessary in elementary school.

"For elementary-school kids, there is really no correlation between homework and achievement," says Denise Pope, Ph.D., a senior lecturer at the Stanford Graduate School of Education and a coauthor of *Overloaded and Underprepared.* "In our research, we couldn't find any studies that said for certain that giving homework taught elementary-age children discipline or organizational strategies or kept them out of trouble." What younger kids need, says Pope, is free play and reading time. "They are learning collaboration and communication," she says. "Homework doesn't necessarily help with that. Even at after-school soccer, an adult is telling your child what to do, just like in school. Children need to be able to freely select what to do with their time—that leads to further innovation in the brain." And, she adds, "if you're fighting with your second grader about a worksheet, if it's a source of tension, that can turn a child off from learning."

Written by Elizabeth Passarella

2

Wait—what? Why do we still have it then?

Well, a lot of parents want it. It's what they expect "school" to entail, says Stephanie Donaldson-Pressman, a clinical director of the New England Center for Pediatric Psychology and a coauthor of *The Learning Habit*. Also, "it teaches students how to work independently, and it's an important link between home and school, parents and teachers," says Lily Eskelsen García, the president of the National Education Association (NEA).

3

Here's what's appropriate.

"Homework in kindergarten is appalling. No one agrees with that," says Donaldson-Pressman. (The NEA doesn't, either, says Eskelsen García.) "But I don't think there's a problem with it in first, second, or third grades. Kids can pick up time-management skills and learn to prioritize and focus," says Donaldson-Pressman. She believes in the often cited 10-minute rule: 10 minutes of work per grade level. But that might not look like studying. "It can be sitting and reading a book *with you* or drawing a picture," says Donaldson-Pressman. "You set a timer. It's part of the routine. Then, by the time the child is in fifth or sixth grade, she is used to sitting for a specific period of time."

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4

It gets more challenging in middle and high school.

"From middle school on up, we start to see a correlation between homework and achievement," says Pope. But there's a limit. The correlation fades after 90 minutes for middle school and two hours for high school. "Our research showed that after the 3½-hour mark, you start to see negative ramifications and health issues," says Pope, much of it from sleep deprivation. This, combined with anxiety and stress, can also lead to depression, according to Pope's research. Why is the work taking so long? "Homework should reinforce and extend topics covered in class," says Eskelsen García. "Ask teachers, and they will tell you that too much classroom time is being spent on testing, not enough on learning." Homework is often used to catch up. What's more, overscheduled kids are starting homework late (and exhausted), so it takes longer to do.

5

Can we come to some resolution?

Probably not entirely. The battle over homework isn't a new one. "Policies aren't always spelled out crystal clear at every school," says Pope. "You have parents and kids saying there's a homework problem, and some schools are saying, 'Really?'" Here are some tips for avoiding battles at home—and talking to your child's teacher.

MAKE A TIME WHEEL. Especially for teenagers, "who think they can do anything," says Pope. Have a 24-hour wheel. Cross out how much sleep they need (she says nine hours), school hours, commuting time, activities, and downtime. Add it up. If there isn't room for homework, you need to rethink.

SIGN A CONTRACT. Decide when and where homework will happen (at 4:30, after one video game, at the kitchen table). "When everyone signs it and there's a plan, arguing tends to stop," says Pope.

BRAINSTORM. "There are teachers who give out a packet. Kids have a certain number of days to do it," so there can be days off, says Pope. "Talk to the teacher—just be respectful. 'Here's what's going on in our house. It's causing a lot of stress. Can you help us with some strategies?'"

DON'T HELP! If your fifth grader focused for 50 minutes and could not finish the assignment, or there are tears, write a note saying so. "If the parent helps without telling the teacher, she'll never know there's an issue," says Donaldson-Pressman.

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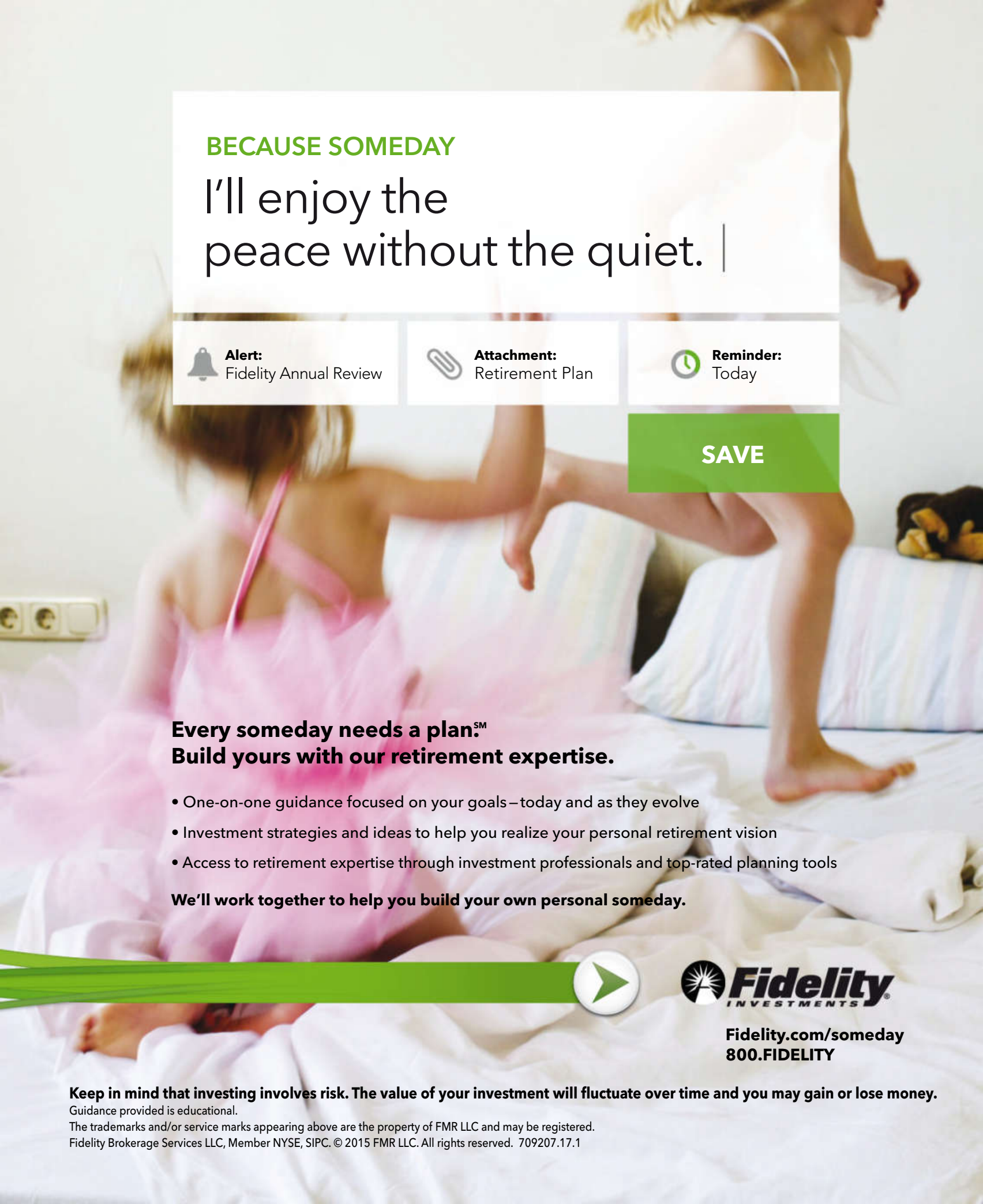

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Work & Money

THE VIEW FROM HERE

BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

LEAH BUSQUE
- Founder and CEO of TaskRabbit
- San Francisco

We've all dreamed of a personal assistant to handle the never-ending to-do list of life. *Leah Busque*, a software engineer by training, turned that fantasy into a business by creating TaskRabbit, the online service where people can hire local help for everything from errand running to furniture assembly. *Real Simple* spoke with Busque, 35, about her life as an engineer/entrepreneur/mother and her journey from eight-year-old bossypants to Silicon Valley CEO.

What was your childhood like?
I grew up in a very small rural town in central Massachusetts. My mom was a stay-at-home mom and my dad worked for the air force for 30 years.

What did you want to be when you grew up?
I remember when I was eight, I asked my dad what the highest rank was in a company and he told me it was CEO. I immediately set up my first business. It was all about recycling and called Pollution Solutions—P.S. for short. I created a little "office space" in our basement, made myself CEO, and basically bossed around my little sister and cousin Mikey for the summer.

You were a software engineer at IBM when you came up with the idea for TaskRabbit.
Yes, it was 2008, and I'd been working there for about seven years. I was living in Boston. One cold, snowy February evening, my husband and I realized we were out of dog food for our Lab, Kobe. We thought, Wouldn't it be nice if we could go online, name the price we wanted to pay, and connect with someone in our neighborhood willing to run the errand for us?

What happened next?
I grabbed my iPhone and typed the first

Written by
Jane Porter

domain name that came to mind, RunMyErrand.com, which was available. Domain names are never available, so I bought it on the spot. Twenty minutes later, I hated it as the name for the company. But we kept it for a while. It was a very simple idea—people can go online and find someone in their area for a particular task. I don't claim to be the first person who thought of it. But because of my background, I could actually build it and code it and create something people could use.

Which you did pretty quickly.
Yes, about four months after that snowy night, I quit my job, built the first version, and launched it in Boston. Now we have about 30,000 taskers making money on the platform across the U.S. and the UK.

"I typed in the first domain name that came to mind, RunMyErrand.com, and bought it on the spot. Twenty minutes later, I hated it."

You were an engineer, not an entrepreneur.
Right. I didn't know anything about raising money from investors, hiring or firing, or building a team. There were so many things to learn.

What's it like to be in a meeting with you?
I've been told that people feel as if they should come prepared. I don't like to have meetings just for the sake of meetings. I really want to maximize our time together. We work pretty efficiently, and that probably stems from our underlying model of creating efficiency for people.

Tell us about your family life.
My daughter, Amelia, is two. She's at that age where she's walking and talking—she's so much fun. The first three or four months, when I was running a company full-time, had this newborn at home, and wasn't sleeping, were pretty tough.

How do you handle life now?
One thing that helps make it work is compartmentalizing my day. I wake up with Amelia around seven,

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and we have an hour together before her nanny comes. During that time, it's all about her. After work, I've got an hour with her before she goes to bed. And I try to keep weekends sacred, as family time.

Your husband was also involved in the company.
Yes, for six years he was VP of technology. He's also a very strong partner at home. If I have a late meeting or an early breakfast, he's at home with the baby.

Do you cook during the week?
No, there's no cooking in my house. I order food pretty much five times a week.

Do you have time to exercise?
Absolutely not. I run the company and spend time with Amelia, and that's pretty much all I can muster right now.

When do you do your best thinking?
Probably when I sleep. I often wake up in the night with ideas or solutions to problems I've been agonizing over for months.

Any final advice for entrepreneurs?
There are so many reasons you shouldn't pursue an idea and so many reasons you're going to tell yourself you *can't* do something. Don't get bogged down by that. If you have an idea, take a step, and see how far you can go.

SPENDING & SAVING

BUYING YOUR OWN MODEM

Renting a modem from your Internet service provider is certainly the path of least resistance: The device arrives when you're hooked up, a mild fee appears on your bill (around $6 or $7 a month), and if anything goes wrong, you can usually call for a repair or a replacement. But 18 months of renting can equal the purchase price of a modem you can count on keeping for a few *years.* That means if you buy a $100 modem, you'll put $150 in your own pocket rather than the ISP's coffers by the third year. The downside: If something goes wrong, you're on your own. Unfazed by that eventuality? Call your ISP to confirm that it allows you to buy your own modem (most do), and check its site for a list of approved models before you shop. —KAITLYN PIRIE

How to make the most of LinkedIn

Are you halfhearted when it comes to this epicenter of career activity? No more slacking. Here are expert tips on maximizing your presence and putting your connections to work for you.

TEND YOUR PROFILE LIKE A GARDEN.

Make sure that your photo matches your field. "If you're a marine biologist, a photo of you by the ocean would make sense. But not if you're an accountant," says Catherine Fisher, LinkedIn's career expert. Spend a few minutes a day (or half an hour per week) building your presence. Add new examples of your work, share articles relevant to your field, and participate in conversations. It makes you look like an expert and increases your visibility, because your activity shows up in other people's feeds. And be polite, says Pamela Weinberg, a career coach and a personal branding strategist: "When you ask someone to connect, personalize your message and remind them of the context in which you met."

FILL IN ALL BLANKS.

Adding awards and volunteer experience may seem excessive, but this stuff matters. A 2011 LinkedIn survey found that 42 percent of hiring managers consider volunteer work equivalent to formal work experience. "Include anything that can differentiate you from others and help you make a connection with someone," says Weinberg.

JOIN YOUR ALUMNI GROUP.

GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR OCCUPATION CAN BE USEFUL FOR NEWS, SHARING INFO, AND LEARNING ABOUT CONFERENCES. "BUT IF YOU'RE NOT A JOINER, AT LEAST JOIN YOUR ALUMNI GROUP," SAYS WEINBERG. IT WILL PROBABLY BE FRUITFUL, BECAUSE ALUMS ARE USUALLY WILLING TO HELP OUT ONE ANOTHER.

USE KEY WORDS, NOT BUZZWORDS.

In the summary at the top of your profile (and throughout), steer clear of overused language like *motivated, passionate,* and *driven.* Instead focus on terms specific to your field. If you're in marketing, say, mention various channels of the field, like "e-commerce" and "search-engine optimization." Recruiters use key words to search for candidates, explains Becky Wallraff, a recruiter-training specialist at Aerotek, a nationwide staffing agency. When possible, she adds, quantify achievements with data: "If you ran the largest event-planning business in Phoenix, give numbers to show scale."

FOR THE LOVE OF PETE, PROOFREAD!

A messy profile, like a messy résumé, is going to be dismissed in an instant. Spend some time proofing your work, then send the link to a wordsmithy friend for a read. Each time you update, take a few minutes to polish.

GET RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ABOVE, BELOW, AND BESIDE.

"It's best to have them from all levels and interactions, including managers, peers, subordinates, and clients," says Wallraff. Remember—recommendations carry much more weight than those check-box endorsements on LinkedIn, says Weinberg. Her rule of thumb is one recommendation per job, unless you've been in the same job for many years—in which case soliciting a few recommendations related to that role makes sense.

Written by Kaitlyn Pirie

Illustrations by Eight Hour Day

A.

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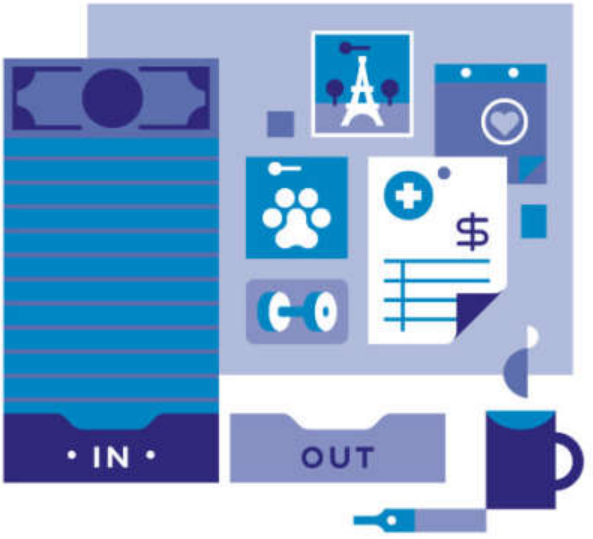
Don't leave money on the table at work

In this joyous season of open enrollment, the experts nudge you to get what's coming to you—beyond the company match on your 401(k). Here's what to do.



FILL OUT THE CORPORATE WELLNESS SURVEY. Does that 100-question poll about your health habits feel a bit...intrusive? Perhaps. But participating can lead to significant discounts on insurance. More price breaks are in store if you sign up for corporate exercise classes or programs that manage issues such as diabetes.

EXPLOIT FLEXIBLE-SPENDING OPTIONS. It might be a bit of a hassle to set up pretax flexible-spending accounts (FSAs) for gym, child-care, and commuting costs, but, says Farnoosh Torabi, the host of the podcast So Money, think of the savings: If you're in the 25 percent tax bracket, paying with pretax FSA dollars gives you 25 percent off. A good motivational mantra.

CONSIDER A HIGH-DEDUCTIBLE HEALTH PLAN. According to Bruce Elliott, the manager of compensation and benefits at the Society for Human Resource Management, high-deductible plans that come with a health savings account (HSA) are worth a look. An HSA is different from a flexible-spending account (which might be attached to a traditional health plan) because HSA funds roll over from year to year. Checkups are typically covered 100 percent with these plans, but if you're nervous about the high deductible, save up enough in your HSA to cover it. Then keep the money there for next year if you don't use it. Some companies contribute to employee HSAs.

HUNT FOR TREASURES. Search your benefits site for hidden perks. You may be covered for the costs of a nutritionist, massages, or acupuncture. While you're in research mode, investigate the Family and Medical Leave Act. Some states (like California, Oregon, and Massachusetts, and also Washington, D.C.) interpret the word *family* more broadly and allow paid time off to care for not just infants but also parents, in-laws, and grandparents.

TAKE OFF. A 2014 survey by the career website Glassdoor found that 75 percent of U.S. workers don't use all their paid vacation. That's like handing a stack of cash back to the boss. The easiest way to maximize benefits is to take all the time you're paid *not* to work.

Written by
Amy Palanjian

Illustration by
Eight Hour Day

ASK BUCKY

TIME INC.'S* ALL-KNOWING, STRAIGHT-SHOOTING VICE PRESIDENT OF STAFFING, BUCKY KEADY, TACKLES YOUR WORKPLACE CONUNDRUMS.

How can you best manage an underling who's also your friend?

You've got to be careful, because others may have the perception that your friend is getting preferential treatment or is privy to confidential information, even if this is not the case. I personally am friendly with everyone on my team, but I'm not *friends* with anyone on my team. That works for me. If you've just been promoted out of your peer set into a new role, it might make sense to have a frank conversation to lay the groundwork. Let the dust settle, get into the job, and then say to your friend, "This is awkward. But as you know, there will be times when I'm not going to be able to share everything with you. Our friendship means a lot to me, so I hope you understand." Honesty is your best tool here.

*TIME INC. IS THE PARENT COMPANY OF *REAL SIMPLE*.

PORTRAIT BY SARAH MAYCOCK

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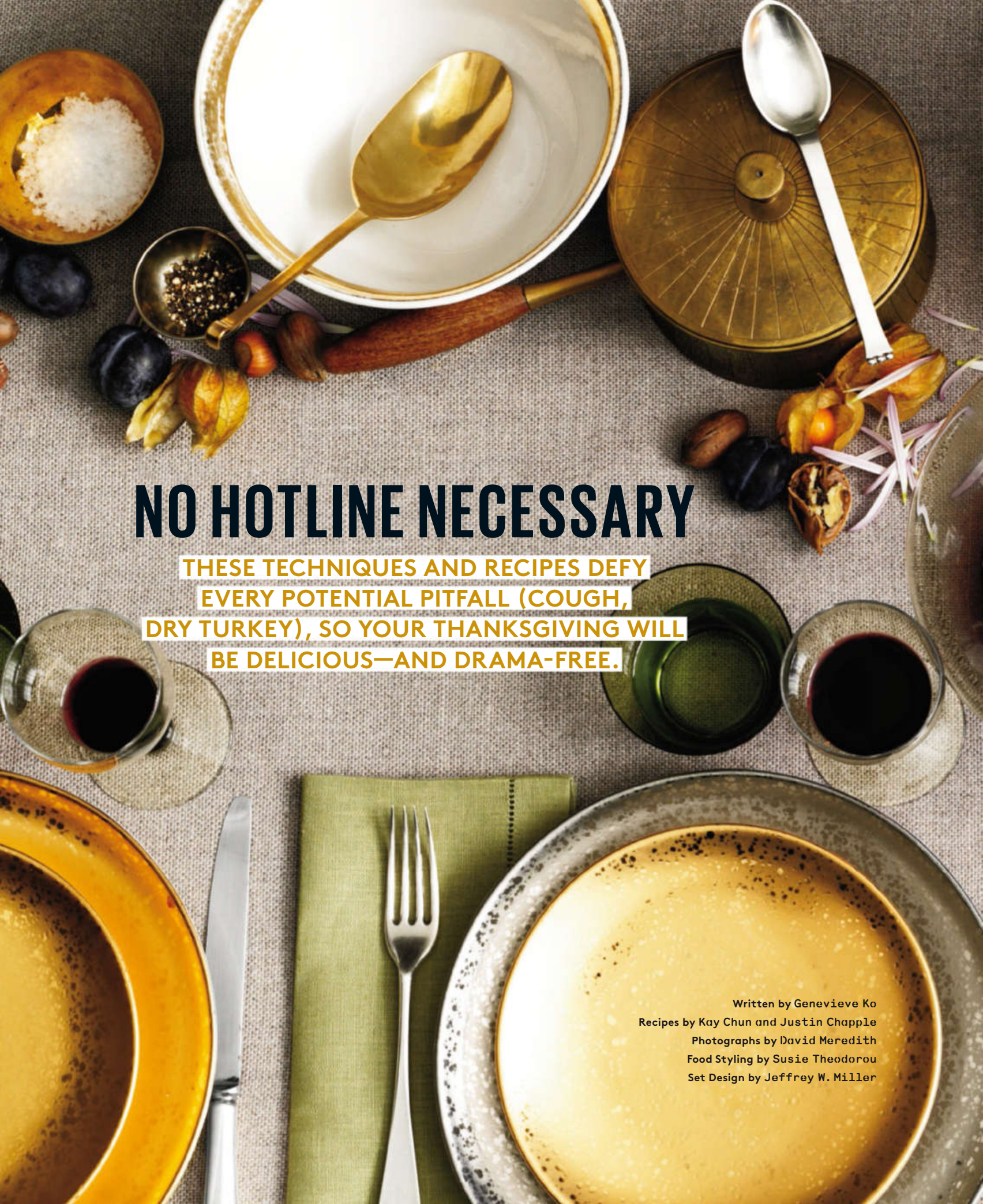
11.2015

MARK WEINBERG (NORWAY, 2013)

OFFSET



NO HOTLINE NECESSARY

THESE TECHNIQUES AND RECIPES DEFY EVERY POTENTIAL PITFALL (COUGH, DRY TURKEY), SO YOUR THANKSGIVING WILL BE DELICIOUS—AND DRAMA-FREE.

Written by Genevieve Ko
Recipes by Kay Chun and Justin Chapple
Photographs by David Meredith
Food Styling by Susie Theodorou
Set Design by Jeffrey W. Miller

CARAMELIZED ONION AND BACON GRAVY
ROASTED TURKEY BREAST WITH CARAWAY-MUSTARD-LEMON BUTTER

PITFALL No. 1

dry turkey

SOLUTION **Skip the whole bird, since breast and legs cook at different speeds, and cook the breast only (or two, for a larger crowd) for a succulent white-meat feast.**

ROASTED TURKEY BREAST WITH CARAWAY-MUSTARD-LEMON BUTTER

HANDS-ON TIME: **15 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **3 HOURS, 15 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons caraway seeds
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 7- to 8-pound bone-in turkey breast
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

HEAT oven to 425° F. Combine the butter, caraway seeds, lemon juice, and 1 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl until well blended.

ARRANGE the turkey on a rack set over a baking sheet. Using your fingertips, carefully loosen the skin from the breast, starting at the neck end. Spread the caraway butter under the skin and over the breast in an even layer. Rub the oil all over the skin and season with 1 teaspoon salt.

ROAST for 30 minutes, until golden. Reduce temperature to 350° F and roast for about 2 hours, basting twice and tenting with foil if the turkey gets too dark, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the breast registers 165° F. Transfer to a cutting board and let stand for 30 minutes.

CARVE the turkey and serve with gravy.

MAKE AHEAD: Rub the breast with the caraway butter up to 1 day before roasting. Leave uncovered in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature 1 hour before roasting.

PITFALL No. 2

watery gravy

SOLUTION **Add roasted onions and bacon, which give it body and flavor. And no lumps—it all goes in the blender.**

CARAMELIZED ONION AND BACON GRAVY

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **50 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 6 slices bacon, finely chopped
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1¼ teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped thyme
- 3½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- Kosher salt and black pepper

HEAT the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring, until soft and caramelized, 30 minutes. Add the bacon, garlic, paprika, and thyme and cook, stirring, until the bacon is browned but not crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the bacon is tender, about 5 minutes.

USING a blender, puree the gravy in batches until smooth. Return the gravy to the skillet and keep warm over low heat. Whisk in 1½ teaspoons salt and ¾ teaspoon pepper. Serve.

MAKE AHEAD: Make the gravy completely. Cool and refrigerate, covered, for up to 3 days. Reheat on the stovetop before serving.

PITFALL No. 3

full before dinner!

SOLUTION **Swap carb-heavy hot hors d'oeuvres for crisp vegetables that stimulate the appetite.**

FALL CRUDITÉS WITH POMEGRANATE RELISH

Raid the market for the prettiest produce that's in season—tiny turnips, cauliflower, radishes, multicolored carrots. Trim or thinly slice the vegetables, then sprinkle them with sea salt, which will slightly soften them and intensify their flavor. Toss together some pomegranate seeds, finely chopped parsley, and a splash of olive oil; drizzle this mixture over the top of the vegetables. Serve with small dishes of nuts, olives, marinated artichokes, and sour pickles.

CRISPY ROASTED SWEET POTATOES WITH LIME
CREAMY MASHED POTATOES WITH SCALLION-CHIVE BUTTER

PITFALL No. 4

too-sweet sweet potatoes

SOLUTION You can't beat this refresh (which *Real Simple* first featured in 2013). No mashing, no marshmallows, plus citrus and fresh herbs.

RS CLASSIC

CRISPY ROASTED SWEET POTATOES WITH LIME

HANDS-ON TIME: **10 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **30 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- 4 sweet potatoes (3 pounds), cut into wedges
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon lime zest, plus 2 tablespoons lime juice
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

HEAT oven to 425° F. Toss the sweet potatoes, oil, lime zest, and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper on 2 rimmed baking sheets.

ROAST, tossing once, until golden brown, 15 to 18 minutes. Drizzle with the lime juice and sprinkle with the cilantro.

MAKE-AHEAD: Cut the sweet potatoes and juice the lime. Refrigerate, covered, up to 1 day in advance.

PITFALL No. 5

cold mashed potatoes

SOLUTION Make them ahead of time (really). When you reheat potatoes in a casserole dish in the oven, they get hotter than boiled-and-mashed alone. A drizzle of hot herb butter (fat plus flavor) just before serving keeps them silky.

CREAMY MASHED POTATOES WITH SCALLION-CHIVE BUTTER

HANDS-ON TIME: **15 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **1½ HOURS**
SERVES **8**

- 3 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 7 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1½ cups whole milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped scallions
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives

COVER the potatoes and garlic with salted water in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain; return the potatoes and garlic to the hot saucepan.

MEANWHILE, in a small saucepan, bring the milk and cream to a simmer. Add 2 tablespoons of the butter. Pour the hot milk mixture over the potatoes and garlic. Season with 2 teaspoons salt and mash with a potato masher until smooth. Transfer the mashed potatoes to a 2-quart ovenproof baking dish. Cool to room temperature, then press the surface with a piece of plastic wrap. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to use.

HEAT oven to 425° F. Let the potatoes stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Remove plastic wrap and bake, covered, until warmed through, about 30 minutes.

MEANWHILE, melt the remaining 6 tablespoons of butter. Combine with the scallions, chives, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Drizzle the herb butter over the potatoes.

SOLUTION Soft bread can soak up broth like a sponge, making the stuffing dense and sticky. Toast the bread first for a lighter, chewier texture.

SOURDOUGH STUFFING WITH ROASTED MUSHROOMS, SHALLOTS, AND CELERY

HANDS-ON TIME: **45 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **2½ HOURS**
SERVES **8**

- 1 pound sourdough bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted, plus more for the baking dish
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 pounds mixed mushrooms, halved or quartered if large
- 12 shallots, halved or quartered if large
- 6 celery ribs, diced
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ cup heavy cream

HEAT oven to 425° F. Toss the bread with 3 tablespoons of the oil, 3 tablespoons of the butter, and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Spread out on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake, tossing once, until dry and golden, 15 to 20 minutes; transfer to a large bowl.

MEANWHILE, toss the mushrooms, shallots, and celery with the remaining 3 tablespoons each of oil and butter and season with 2 teaspoons salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Spread on 2 large rimmed baking sheets and roast, tossing halfway through, until tender and browned in spots, 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer to the same bowl as the bread.

WHISK the broth with the eggs and cream in a medium bowl. Add to the bowl. Let sit, tossing occasionally, until the liquid is absorbed, 5 to 10 minutes.

TRANSFER the stuffing to a buttered 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Cover with foil. Bake until heated through, 30 minutes. Uncover and bake until the top is browned and crisp, 30 minutes more. Serve.

MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate the stuffing in the dish, unbaked, overnight. Bring to room temperature 30 minutes before baking.

PITFALL No. 6

gummy stuffing

BEET AND RICOTTA SALATA SALAD

SOURDOUGH STUFFING WITH ROASTED MUSHROOMS, SHALLOTS, AND CELERY

CARAMELIZED BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND KALE WITH CRISPY CAPERS
GRAPEFRUIT-APRICOT CRANBERRY RELISH WITH ROSEMARY

PITFALL No. 7

boring, wilted salads

SOLUTION Add on this bright beet salad (a *RS* favorite that first ran in 2013). It can stand at room temperature without going slimy.

RS CLASSIC

BEET AND RICOTTA SALATA SALAD

HANDS-ON TIME: **15 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **45 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- 4 medium beets (about 1½ pounds), peeled and cut into wedges
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves
- 2 tablespoons chopped roasted almonds
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 2 ounces ricotta salata or pecorino, thinly sliced

HEAT oven to 450° F. Toss the beets, 4 tablespoons of the oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast, tossing once, until tender, 30 to 35 minutes.

TOP with the mint, almonds, vinegar, ricotta salata, the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

MAKE AHEAD: Roast the beets up to 2 days in advance. Store, covered, in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before dressing and serving.

PITFALL No. 8

stiff cranberry sauce

SOLUTION Unless you're a canned-cranberry fan (hey, we get it), keep your relish loose and fruity by adding less sugar and limiting the cooking time.

GRAPEFRUIT-APRICOT CRANBERRY RELISH WITH ROSEMARY

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **30 MINUTES**
MAKES **3 CUPS**

- 4 cups fresh or frozen cranberries (14 ounces)
- 1½ cups freshly squeezed grapefruit juice
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 sprig rosemary
- ½ cup thinly sliced dried apricots (2 ounces), plus more for garnishing
- ¼ cup golden raisins

COMBINE all the ingredients except the apricots and raisins with ½ cup water in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil.

COOK over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until just thickened, about 15 minutes. Stir in the apricots and raisins and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Discard the rosemary.

TRANSFER the relish to a serving bowl. Cool to room temperature, then chill. Stir in more apricots and serve.

MAKE-AHEAD: Make the relish, cover, and refrigerate for up to 4 days. Bring to room temperature before serving.

PITFALL No. 9

sad, limp green vegetables

SOLUTION Quickly sauté the greens to keep them bright and fresh. You'll also save oven space.

CARAMELIZED BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND KALE WITH CRISPY CAPERS

HANDS-ON TIME: **30 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **30 MINUTES**
SERVES **8**

- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup drained capers, patted dry
- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts, thinly sliced
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 8 cups baby kale (5 ounces)
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 fresh long red pepper, thinly sliced
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus more for garnishing

HEAT 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet. Add the capers and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until golden and crisp, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the capers to a paper towel–lined plate.

ADD 2 tablespoons of the oil, half the Brussels sprouts, and half the onion to the skillet. Season with ½ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon black pepper. Cook over moderate heat, stirring, until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large plate. Repeat with the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, Brussels sprouts, and onion.

RETURN all the Brussels sprouts to the skillet and stir in the kale, lemon juice, red pepper, and Parmesan. Season with ½ teaspoon salt and stir to combine. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish with the capers and more Parmesan.

SERVE warm or at room temperature.

MAKE-AHEAD: Slice the vegetables and refrigerate in airtight containers for up to 2 days.

PITFALL No. 10

piecrust that won't cooperate

SOLUTION **Skip the pie altogether. Make an easy-to-patch lattice-top tart (a classic from the *RS* recipe files).**

RS CLASSIC

RASPBERRY CROSTATA

HANDS-ON TIME: **20 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **1 HOUR, 10 MINUTES (INCLUDES CHILLING)**
SERVES **8**

- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt
- ½ cup cold unsalted butter (1 stick), cubed
- 1 egg
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup seedless raspberry or other favorite jam

PULSE the flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt in a food processor fitted with a metal blade until combined.

ADD the butter and pulse until the dough just begins to clump together.

ADD the egg and vanilla and continue to process until the dough comes together into a ball. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, if necessary.

SHAPE into a disk, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate at least 20 minutes or until firm.

HEAT oven to 350° F. Press half the dough into the bottom of a 9-inch pie or tart pan, creating about a ½-inch-tall rim around the edge; set aside.

HEAT the jam in a saucepan over low heat until just melted. Pour it into the prepared pan.

TO MAKE THE LATTICE, roll the remaining dough into an 8-inch round on a floured surface, then cut with a pizza wheel or scalloped pastry cutter into 8 strips. Arrange over the jam in a crisscross pattern. Trim the ends and press together to patch as needed.

BAKE until the crust is golden and the jam starts to bubble, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool before serving.

MAKE AHEAD: Bake the pie and keep, wrapped in plastic, at room temperature for up to 2 days.

SOLUTION **Start with a foolproof dough that you press into the pan—no rolling required.**

SPICED MIXED-NUT PIE

HANDS-ON TIME: **25 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME: **2 HOURS (INCLUDES CHILLING)**
SERVES **8**

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 10 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cubed
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup dark brown sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons dark rum
- 1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 cups salted roasted mixed nuts
- Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, for serving (optional)

PULSE the flour, butter, and salt in a food processor fitted with a metal blade until the mixture resembles coarse meal, with a few pea-size clumps of butter remaining. Add ⅓ cup ice water. Pulse until the dough is still crumbly but holds together when squeezed.

PRESS evenly into the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch pie plate to hang ¼ inch over the rim. Decoratively crimp the edge with a fork or your thumb. Freeze the piecrust until firm, 30 to 40 minutes.

HEAT oven to 375° F.

BEAT the eggs with the brown sugar, corn syrup, rum, pumpkin pie spice, and vanilla in a large bowl. Stir in the nuts. Scrape the filling into the piecrust and place on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake until the pie is mostly set but still slightly wobbly in the center, 50 to 55 minutes. Let cool completely.

SERVE with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, if desired.

MAKE-AHEAD: Press the dough into the pan, wrap well, and freeze for up to 2 weeks. Or bake the pie and keep, wrapped in plastic, at room temperature for up to 2 days.

BIRD BASICS
For a detailed guide to roasting the best whole turkey, go to realsimple.com/turkey.

YOUR BIGGEST THANKSGIVING HANG-UP IS...

How to get everything to the table, hot, at the same time. (How do we know? We asked on Facebook, and a *lot* of you answered.) There's no magic bullet. It's a big meal. But here are three basic tips, whether you're using the menu here or not: Do as much ahead of time as you can, serve things that taste great at room temperature, and have a mix of cook-in-the-oven and cook-on-the-stovetop dishes. This menu is about 60-40. Here's a timeline to help you stay organized.

UP TO 2 DAYS BEFORE
- Thaw the turkey breast, if frozen. Stuff it with the herb butter.
- Make the gravy, cranberry relish, and mashed potatoes.
- Make and refrigerate the piecrusts.
- Toast the bread and cut the vegetables for the stuffing.
- Roast the beets.

THE NIGHT BEFORE
- Prep the vegetables for the sides and the crudité tray.
- Bake the pies.
- Prep, but don't bake, the stuffing.

4 HOURS BEFORE
- Take out the cranberry relish.
- Roast the turkey and let it rest.

1½ HOURS BEFORE
- Remove the stuffing from the refrigerator.

1 HOUR BEFORE
- Bake the stuffing.
- Make the Brussels sprouts.
- Remove the mashed potatoes from the refrigerator.

½ HOUR BEFORE
- Cook the mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes.
- Heat the gravy.

RASPBERRY
CROSTATA
SPICED
MIXED-NUT
PIE

PARTY GUEST PROTOCOL

Real Simple **cordially invites you to be a sparkling conversationalist, an ambidextrous buffet maneuverer, and an all-around delightful attendee (who can gracefully exit whenever she darn well pleases).**

Written by Penny Wrenn Illustrations by Edholm Ullenius

PRE-PARTY TO-DO'S

Shopping for a dress and hiring a babysitter can wait. First things first.

COMMON RSVP TRAPS (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

The bottom line for responding to a party invitation politely is this: RSVP ASAP—as in within a day or two. But when your answer isn't a clear-cut yes or no—well, that's when things get sticky. Jodi R. R. Smith, the founder of Mannersmith Etiquette Consulting, demystifies murky scenarios.

You're weighing your options.
Don't know? Say no. You never have the etiquette gods' blessing to say nothing at all. "Without any response, the host doesn't know if the invitation has been received or if you're purposely ignoring her," says Smith. On the other hand, if it's an Evite, your host can see that you've scanned the invitation, so you'll come off as a jerk if you continue to ignore it. Furthermore, saying, "I'll try to come," or clicking the "maybe" button can be puzzling for a host planning a menu. Unless it's a formal dinner, most hosts are happy to hear from you a week or so beforehand asking if there's still room for you to join the festivities.

PARTY PROTOCOL

AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE AN INVITATION, CREATE AN ALERT ON YOUR PHONE TO REMIND YOU TO RSVP TWO DAYS LATER. THIS GIVES YOU TIME TO MULL IT OVER WITHOUT THE RISK OF FORGETTING TO REPLY.

You don't want to go but have no excuse.
Resist the urge to lie about other plans. It's unnecessary to offer an explanation about why you're declining. If you would simply prefer to chill with Netflix, say, "Thank you so much for inviting me, but I can't attend this year." In fact, when you give someone a reason why you can't make it, then you might be giving them an opportunity to renegotiate the terms, says Smith. (In other words, your friend says, "You can't come that day? Well, I'll do it the following Friday instead." And you're left defenseless, saying, "Oh...great" in your fake excited voice.) Also: Say no right away. When you wait, it seems as if you're hemming and hawing.

You would like to bring someone else.
You shouldn't assume that you can bring even your spouse, much less your child(ren). For clarification, Smith recommends a simple "Sounds great! Shall I tell the hubby, too?" or "Can't wait! Is this an adults-only occasion, or will it include kids?" If you want to bring your cousins who'll be in town that week, then Smith says this requires a call. "Start with something like 'I'm so excited you invited me. I'm in a bit of a pickle, though, because my two cousins are going to be here' and then pause," says Smith. "Hopefully, your host will chime in with 'The more the merrier!' or somehow give you the green light that it's OK." If she doesn't, adhere to the host's wishes.

PARTY PROTOCOL

ENSURE THAT THE DISH YOU BRING STAYS NICE AND WARM (OR COLD) AND PREVENT SPILLS IN TRANSIT WITH PICNIC AT ASCOT'S THERMAL FOOD CARRIER ($37, ZOLA.COM). IT'S EVEN EASY TO CARRY ONE-HANDED.

You're only going to make an appearance.
"Unless the occasion is a more structured event—for example, a sit-down dinner—it's expected that people are going to drift in and out of a party," says Smith. "So you don't need to announce that you're going to a stop by for only a minute." As long as you plan to stay for at least 30 minutes, then you're in the happy-guest/happy-host zone. If you really can be there for only 5 or 10 minutes, then it's best not to go at all.

You replied yes but can no longer attend.
An "Oh no!" beats a no-show. "As soon as you know that you won't be there, tell your host—whether it's two days before or two hours before," says Smith. A telephone call is preferable—after that, a text, then an e-mail. If you're sick or having car trouble, go ahead and relay to the host what happened. But what do you say when the reason is more personal (say, a big fight with your husband or you're too deep into a *Veep* marathon)? Keep the decline vague, so you don't end up being the talk of the party without even being there. Tell her, "I'm not going to be able to make your party. I'm terribly sorry I'm going to miss it."

IF THE HOST SAYS, "JUST BRING YOURSELF"...

Guess what? She means it. Asking "What can I bring?" is certainly a mannerly gesture, but your provisions may not be welcome. Some hosts relish whipping up a well-thought-out menu and being Little Miss "I Insist" may not score you brownie points. "The guests who impress me most are the ones who enjoy the party without trying to take over," says Lizzie Post, who hosts the weekly podcast Awesome Etiquette. "I want my guests to let me take care of them for a night. That makes me feel good."

Take *Real Simple*'s cook-and-carry pledge

"I WILL ARRIVE WITH A PREPARED DISH, NOT A BAG OF INGREDIENTS."
Complete the recipe in your home, not the host's. One exception: a last-minute sprinkle or toss before serving.

"I WILL BRING A SERVING VESSEL AND TOOLS."
Just because you have seven kinds of salad tongs doesn't mean that she does, too.

"I WILL GIVE THE HOST AN ADEQUATE HEADS-UP IF MY FOOD REQUIRES ON-SITE OVEN TIME."
To make room for your dish, there may need to be some serious stove rejiggering.

IF THE HOST SAYS, "SURE, WHY DON'T YOU BRING...?"

An appetizer, a salad, or a dessert. Try one of these guaranteed crowd-pleasers.

20-MINUTE APPETIZER

LOADED BAKED POTATO DIP

STEP 1 Pierce a large potato and microwave on high power in 2-minute intervals. Turn the potato each time, until it's easily pierced with a fork, 10 to 12 minutes.

STEP 2 Cook 6 slices of bacon over medium heat in a large skillet until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel–lined plate. Let cool, then crumble.

STEP 3 Mash the potato (skin and all) well in a large bowl.

STEP 4 While it's still warm, fold in 2 cups plain Greek yogurt, 2 cups grated Cheddar, ¾ cup warm milk, 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, ½ cup chopped chives, the crumbled bacon, and 1 teaspoon each salt and pepper.

STEP 5 Top with more Cheddar and chives. Serve at room temperature with potato chips, celery, and endive leaves.

MAKE-AHEAD SALAD

BIBB LETTUCE WITH HAZELNUTS, RAISINS, AND SHALLOT VINAIGRETTE

STEP 1 Combine 1 small finely chopped shallot, ¼ cup golden raisins, ½ cup olive oil, ½ cup lemon juice, a pinch of sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper in a large bowl.

STEP 2 Let sit, stirring occasionally, until the shallot softens slightly, 10 to 15 minutes. The vinaigrette can be set aside for up to 4 hours.

STEP 3 Toss together ½ cup roasted hazelnuts (roughly chopped) and 1½ pounds Bibb lettuce (torn).

STEP 4 Just before serving, add the dressing and toss to coat. Serve at room temperature.

ONE-BOWL DESSERT

ORANGE-VANILLA BEAN CAKE WITH CHOCOLATE GLAZE

STEP 1 Heat oven to 350° F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan.

STEP 2 Split 1 vanilla bean in half lengthwise using a sharp paring knife. Run the dull side of the knife blade down the length of each half, scraping up the seeds. Combine the seeds and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl.

STEP 3 Whisk in 2 cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, ¼ teaspoon baking soda, and ¾ teaspoon salt. Add 1 stick of butter (melted), ½ cup buttermilk, 2 large eggs (whisked), 1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest, and 2 tablespoons orange juice and whisk to combine. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan.

STEP 4 Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely.

STEP 5 Make the glaze: In a small saucepan, bring ½ cup heavy cream just to a boil. Remove from heat, add 4 ounces semisweet chocolate (coarsely chopped), and let sit for 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth; let cool until slightly thickened, 10 to 15 minutes. Set the wire rack with the cake over a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle the cake with the glaze and let set before serving, 20 to 30 minutes.

PARTY PROTOCOL

SENDING A THANK-YOU CARD IS ALWAYS CLASSIEST. BUT IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO PUT IT OFF, WRITE A TEXT OR E-MAIL, NO MORE THAN TWO DAYS AFTERWARD.

PICK UP A HOSTESS GIFT (PLEASE, SOMETHING OTHER THAN WINE)

These ideas are more creative yet can be bought at the grocery store (or printed out just before you walk out the door).

COOL TREAT

"Pair a carton of to-die-for ice cream with all the fixings for sundaes—and don't forget the scoop." *—Erin L. Lepperd, managing editor of the blog Style Me Pretty*

FLOWERS 2.0

"Show your host that her parties are always a great 'thyme' by giving her fresh herbs growing in pretty pots." *—Carla McDonald, founder of the blog The Salonnière*

MORNING-AFTER KIT

"Add pancake mix, two mugs, a bag of freshly ground coffee, and a bottle of Advil. Then wrap it in newspaper." *—Michelle Bachman and Seri Kertzner of the blog Little Miss Party*

DIGITAL MEMORY

"Print out a gift card for Artifact Uprising so the host can make an artsy book to commemorate the evening." (From $18, artifactuprising.com.) *—Carley Knobloch, digital expert*

PARTY-GOING BASICS

Arriving and gifting, eating and greeting, lending a hand and saying "thanks." (If you think these are no-brainers, think again.)

MAKE AN ENTRANCE

BE ON TIME–ISH.
Never be early. The last thing that she wants is to hear the doorbell when she's half-dressed, garnishing a tray. Still, that's no excuse to be fashionably late. "Arrive within 15 minutes of an event's start," says Preston Bailey, a New York City event designer. "But when there is a dinner, arrive on time." If you're going to be more than an hour late (and it's not a casual, drop-in sort of party), tell the host in advance.

SMILE.
Bypass the "it's raining cats and dogs" frown and the "I made four wrong turns" exasperation and instead pause for a moment to greet the host amiably. Sure, you can then make your way directly to the bar—just make a point to say hi to people along the way.

REMOVE YOUR SHOES, IF ASKED.
"You always have to be prepared for another person's house rules," says Diane Gottsman, the founder of the Protocol School of Texas. Yes, even if you're sockless and you haven't gotten a recent pedicure. (Take note for the next time!)

"EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY" AIN'T AS EASY AS IT SOUNDS

Answers to everything you've been secretly wondering about.

PARTY PROTOCOL

NO TOOTHPICK TO RETRIEVE THE FRUIT IN A COCKTAIL? HAMILTON GIVES A THUMBS-UP TO USING YOUR FINGERS.

Am I slicing the cheese properly?

For hard cheeses, reach for the stumpy knife with a squarish blade (a.k.a. an Italian cheese knife) to lop off bite-size chunks, says Dorothy Hamilton, the founder of the International Culinary Center, in New York City. For soft cheeses, use a butter knife or a spoon. As for the rind, eat it if it's edible (yes to Brie and Camembert; not so much with waxy Gouda or tough Parmesan)—or cut it off and leave the remnants on your plate. Please don't dig out the good part of the cheese, leaving a carcass of rind on the buffet table.

Puff pastries and crostini—one bite or two?

Sure, if you shove it all in your mouth at once, you'll avoid potential squirts, dribbles, and crumbs, but you'll also be rendered mute while you chew (and chew). Besides, says Hamilton, "you never really enjoy a too-large piece of food in your mouth." Instead, she says, "hold a napkin a few inches below your chin to catch anything while you take several small bites."

How can I balance a drink and a plate and still have a hand free for a handshake?

May we present "the Clutch and Clip" (illustrated above). Using your left hand, clutch a glass with your thumb, ring finger, and pinkie, as you clip a (lightweight!) cocktail-size plate between your index and middle fingers. This leaves your right hand free to shake.

What's the right way to scoop the dip?

Double-dipping, as the entire post-*Seinfeld* world knows, is a no-no. One direct dunk with a chip or a veggie is OK. But the most elegant way is to place a bit onto a plate with a spoon. No utensils in sight? Scoop up extra dip with a carrot or celery stick for your other vegetables.

Is is possible to eat chicken wings without making a mess?

Nope. Just go for it—and realize that everyone else will get messy, too. However, if you hold the wing in one hand and rotate it as you bite, you'll at least keep the other hand clean.

How can I delicately take an olive pit out of my mouth?

Try Hamilton's discreet maneuver: "I'm right-handed, so I place my left hand over my mouth, take the pit out with my right hand, then quickly wrap the pit in a napkin."

"How can I help?"

Somewhere along the way, we learned that a good party guest should be a worker bee. Not true, says Gottsman: "While you may offer, it's offensive to the host if she feels like you're cleaning up after her." Four ways to stealthily contribute to the good time without stepping on toes.

BE TECH-FREE. When one person pulls out a phone, everyone pulls out a phone. But good manners can be just as contagious. Stash your phone away and you'll influence others to follow your lead.

BE A SECRET DOER. Pick trash up off the floor; refill the toilet-paper roll; take an extra platter off her hands. "These are little things that you can do quietly and don't need to ask the host about," says Gottsman.

BE A HERDER. When "dinner is served" yet no one budges, say, "I think our host want us to proceed to the dining room" to move things along. Same goes for times when the crowd congregates in the kitchen.

BE WELCOMING. The host is going to stress about her coworker sitting in the corner or no one talking to her neighbor Jim. Put her at ease by chatting with guests who don't know anyone else.

PARTYGOER PH.D.

Advanced advice to help you take the night in stride, whatever happens to come your way.

3 questions to get the conversational ball rolling

Rule No. 1: "Ask open-ended questions so you don't get a one-word, dead-end answer," says Patricia Rossi, an etiquette coach in Tampa, Florida. You can bust out these simple queries on anyone, anytime. And if the conversation loses steam, there's always "Let's go check out the food."

"I LOVE YOUR ——! WHERE DID YOU GET IT?"
It's the one-two knockout punch of icebreakers, because you're genuinely complimenting someone while also getting her to talk about herself.

"WHAT ARE YOUR HOLIDAY PLANS?"
It's not the most exciting question in the world, but the answer will probably give you an opportunity to ask interesting follow-up questions. ("You're going skiing? When did you first learn to ski?")

"WHAT ARE YOU READING/LISTENING TO/WATCHING THESE DAYS?"
Ask this instead of the typical "What have you been up to?" which could easily prompt a vague answer, like "Oh, you know. A little bit of this, a little bit of that."

WHEN YOU *(EEK)* DON'T KNOW ANYONE

Good for you for showing up. Here's some help in the mingling department.

CHOOSE A TARGET.

Your safest bet is another lone ranger like yourself. If she returns a smile, great—that's a universal sign that someone is receptive to chatting with you. Even if she doesn't, ignore the "don't talk to me" body language. Probably her arms are crossed or her eyes are glued to her phone because she's anxious about being alone. As for groups, notes Rossi, look for gatherings of three or more, which tend to be more welcoming than a pair. Or consider hanging out near the bar, says Thomas P. Farley, a.k.a. Mister Manners, an etiquette expert in New York City. "It's easier to start an off-the-cuff conversation there than breaking into a circle."

OPEN WITH SOMETHING SUPERFICIAL.

Before you introduce yourself, offer a simple observation about the evening. "I love the music tonight!" or "The scallops are amazing!" Think of this as an appetizer, a warm-up to a real conversation. Plus, it's less awkward than a cold introduction and handshake.

DON'T GET CLINGY.

Congrats if you've made a buddy—just don't monopolize her time all night. "Spend no more than seven minutes on each interaction," says Farley, who adds that you can certainly return for a follow-up later. But by then you'll surely have met other people.

AWKWARD.

How to avoid a party foul—and how to recover when you make one.

You knock over a vase.
Apologize. ("Oh, my goodness! I'm sorry!") Then assist with damage control. ("Where can I find a dustpan to clean this up?") The host will probably tell you not to worry about it, but send a note and a gift anyway. "You don't have to replace the damaged item by price point," says Gottsman. "But it's a nice gesture to let her know that you felt bad." For a minor infraction, like spilling a drink, just help clean up. That is, unless the drink ended up on some guy's shirt. In that case, offer to pay for the dry cleaning. If he resists, let it go.

All the food violates your diet.
"When you go to a cocktail party, you should anticipate that you may not be able to eat the food," says Gottsman. Her advice? If, say, you're vegan or allergic to popular foods, like gluten and dairy, never show up at an event on an empty stomach. For a dinner party, let the host know of your restrictions when you RSVP, but tell her that you'll bring your vegetarian casserole for everyone to try, says Rossi. "That way, you'll have something to eat without putting her on the spot to cook specially for you."

Oops, you really put your foot in your mouth.
Don't pretend that it didn't happen. Acknowledge it and laugh it off, says Rossi. So if you

spaced and called Tracy "Trixie," say, "It's been a long day. I have your name up here in my gray matter somewhere—I just need a little help recalling it." For a touchier matter (asking "When's the baby due?" to an unpregnant woman or "How's the wife?" to a recent divorcé), stick with "Please forgive me," then change the subject. Adds Farley, "If you realize your error the following day, let it slide, but make sure you get it right the next time."

Seriously, you don't want seconds.
When she has the serving spoon hovering over your plate, start with a compliment to soothe her ego, says Rossi. "It was so delicious, but I've already eaten more than I should." And if she asks again, don't cave in. It's not rude to turn down seconds, says Gottsman: "If your host is sensitive about that, that says more about her than it does about you."

You're dying to take home leftovers.
Unless the host offers, forget it. "There's no appropriate way to ask without making the host uncomfortable," says Gottsman. And dropping a hint like "I'd bet that stuffing will heat up well tomorrow" never sounds as subtle as you think. It might get you the food you want, but it will probably also make you look, well, kind of desperate.

Keeping your kids in check

They're invited? Um, great. Faye de Muyshondt, the founder of the SocialskIz etiquette program, in New York City, has a strategy.

LAY OUT EXPECTATIONS.
"Be proactive, not reactive," says de Muyshondt. Before the party, say, "Here's what I'd love to see from you today." Then relay three rules, such as: "Ask permission before you go anywhere"; "Use your indoor voice"; and "Keep your feet on the ground at all times" (for furniture climbers).

AVOID A SCENE.
If one of your kids breaks a rule, quietly take him or her aside and say, "That was one of the expectations we talked about. If it happens again, we're leaving." Be prepared to follow through—you're setting a precedent for future events.

FOCUS ON YOUR BROOD.
When other guests' children are influencing your kids to act like wild animals, reinforce your own rules. "This is an opportunity for the 'just because someone else is doing it doesn't mean you can do it' life lesson," says de Muyshondt.

MAKE A GRACEFUL EXIT

HOW CAN I SPEED UP MY GOOD-BYES? THEY'RE ALWAYS SO DRAGGED OUT.
Simply thank your host for a great time and tell her you're sorry you have to run so soon—again, no explanation necessary. And if she says, "What—you're leaving already?" Post recommends that your response should be a stalwart-yet-sweet "I know. I'm so sorry I can't stay. I can't wait to get together again." Repeat as necessary. The more confident you are about your exit, the less dramatic and drawn-out it will be.

HOW EARLY IS TOO EARLY TO GO HOME?
"Generally you don't want to be the first to leave and you don't want to be the last," says Smith. It's customary to stay for the cake or the toast if it's that kind of party. If you must depart before everyone else, expedite the exit process with a preemptive explanation ahead of time. ("We have to head out at 9 P.M. to relieve the babysitter.") This will avoid the back-and-forth on the way out.

THERE'S A SUDDEN MASS EXODUS OF GUESTS. HAVE YOU MISSED YOUR WINDOW TO LEAVE?
Maybe, says Rossi: "Stick it out for another 20 or 30 minutes—it's the decent thing to do." And definitely do so if it's a close friend throwing the shindig. "It's girlfriend code," says Rossi.

"You're obliged to hang out longer to help the party have staying power, even if there's only you and three bores left."

WHAT IS "GHOSTING," AND CAN YOU GET AWAY WITH IT?
Ghosting is disappearing from a party without a trace. No "see you soon," no hand wave, no putting a bug in someone else's ear to tell the host that you had to run and you're so sorry you couldn't say good-bye. "This is never OK," says Post. "You definitely can't just 'peace out' of a party." But, acknowledges Rossi, this is sometimes the only way to escape. She says, "You can ghost if you are at a large gathering where you won't be missed and you know that if you say good-bye, the host will nag you to stay for one more drink."

HAVE YOU OVERSTAYED YOUR WELCOME?
It's time to call it a night when the host starts putting away the liquor, turning on the lights, or turning off the music. And if you find yourself in this situation, don't apologize about staying too late, says Smith: "Then the host will feel obligated to reply, 'No, stay!' Just say thanks and get out."

PARTY PROTOCOL

"PARTIES AREN'T TIT-FOR-TAT," SAYS SMITH. "THERE ARE NO HARD-AND-FAST RULES ON RECIPROCATING."

THICK

HAIR HACK: This type takes forever to dry and style. Fake a blow-out by showering at night and twisting damp hair into a high bun. In the morning, undo it, and wind a half-inch iron through a few front and side sections. Set with hair spray.

HOW TO CARE FOR *your* hair

DIFFERENT FOLKS NEED DIFFERENT STROKES: A CUSTOMIZED GUIDE FOR EVERY TYPE AND TEXTURE.

Written by Kayleigh Donahue Hodes Photographs by Paul Westlake

CURLY

HAIR HACK: Ditch the towel. After washing, gently wring out the excess water, then wrap hair up in an old cotton T-shirt. The soft fabric won't rough up the cuticles, which can cause frizz or, worse, breakage.

WHY ARE YOU IN A PERMANENT BATTLE WITH YOUR HAIR?

Despite years of practice in the washing, cutting, and styling departments, you either come up short (or limp or frizzy) or you nail it—but you would still trade for your friend's hair any day of the week. It's time to call a truce. This tailor-made, best-and-final advice from the top pros in the business should lead you to a peaceful (and pretty) resolution.

curly hair

WASH

"Shampooing can make curls look frizzier, so try to do it no more than twice a week," says Timothy Brad Wandrey, the director of education for Cutler/Redken Salons. "The natural oils produced on your scalp, combined with the right product, make curls look better with time." (The downside: If too much time passes between shampoos, your hair can look flat.) When you do wash, make sure you do it right. "Due to twists along the hair shafts, curly hair is prone to tangling," says Anabel Kingsley, a trichologist at the Philip Kingsley Trichological Clinic. To avoid this, gently massage a hydrating cleanser, like ① **L'Oréal Paris EverCurl Hydracharge Cleansing Conditioner** ($7 at drugstores), into your scalp, running your fingers through to your midlengths. Then, as you condition, work a wide-tooth comb through, starting at the ends and slowly inching your way up the hair shafts with every pass. "Never start detangling from the top, as this can result in breakage," she says.

CUT

There's no set timeline for a cut. It mostly depends on the hair's shape, says Wandrey. As soon as your hair starts to flatten at the crown, make an appointment. "Come in with unstyled hair to make sure the cut enhances your natural curl pattern for when you style it at home," says Wandrey. If you plan on wearing your hair curly all of the time, find a stylist who specializes in dry-cutting curly hair. If you think you're going to straighten it at least once a week, then it can be cut wet or dry, depending on what your stylist thinks is best for your spiral.

COLOR

"Curly hair can be very dry and porous, so it can grab too much color and look darker on the ends," says Justin Anderson, a colorist at the Chris McMillan Salon, in Beverly Hills. Says Ian Michael Black, the global artistic director for hair color for Aveda, "Curly hair is great at camouflaging gray roots because it's not uniform in texture, and that tends to make the roots less visible." Let that work in your favor. You can go 6 to 10 weeks between root touch-ups and 10 to 14 weeks between highlights.

STYLE

"Curly hair responds well to creams and gels," says Wandrey. Creams such as ② **SheaMoisture Coconut & Hibiscus Curl Enhancing Smoothie** ($12, ulta.com) add moisture and encourage the curls, while a gel defines them. You can create a custom cocktail of a few different styling products to get these effects, or look for a single product (better!) that does everything, like Wandrey's favorite: ③ **Redken Curvaceous Full Swirl Cream-Serum** ($19, ulta.com). Work through damp curls in dime-size increments, rubbing it between your hands, then gently twisting it into coils all over your head.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOLLY WALES

fine hair

FINE

HAIR HACK: Apply dry shampoo at night—not in the morning. This will give it more time to absorb excess oil, and any tossing and turning you do will give your hair more texture and volume the next day.

WASH

"Because fine hair is smallest in diameter, there are more hairs per square centimeter," says Kingsley. And each hair follicle has its own oil gland, so it takes less time for you to get greasy compared with your thick-haired friends. To avoid limp strands, wash every day to every other day using a volumizing formula, like in ① **Klorane Shampoo and** ② **Conditioner with Flax Fiber** ($15 and $16, klorane usa.com), "which are lightweight and won't weigh down hair," says Wandrey.

STYLE

Volumizing sprays, root lifters, and texturizers, like ③ **John Frieda Beach Blonde Sea Waves Sea Salt Spray** ($10 at drugstores), are a boon to any fine-haired woman. When it comes to blow-drying, get an added boost by using a round boar-and-nylon–bristle brush. In between washes, try a dry shampoo, like ④ **One Love Organics Healthy Locks Dry Shampoo Powder** ($12, oneloveorganics.com). It contains rice and cornstarch instead of talc or silica, "which can clog hair follicles," says Christyn Nawrot, a national educator for Phyto and a licensed cosmetologist.

CUT

Trim your hair every 8 to 10 weeks. "Fine hair tends to be weaker and can't take as much abuse as medium/course hair can, leading to split ends quickly," says Wandrey. Ask for very light layers or a more blunt type of cut (as opposed to getting the ends snipped into or razored). This will make your hair appear fuller.

COLOR

"Fresh, vibrant color can make hair look and feel fuller," says Black. To cover grays, touch up your roots every four to six weeks. "Just refrain from pulling the color through the ends. Only do that every other time, depending on how faded your ends are," says Anderson. "Fine hair can be porous, which means it can grab color quickly and look darker than planned." If you get highlights, space out your appointments to every eight weeks to avoid overlapping the bleach, which can weaken strands and lead to breakage.

CUT

Consider yourself lucky. "This texture is pretty low-maintenance," says Wandrey. "A cut every 10 to 12 weeks is all you need." Those with mid-length to long hair will need a cut only four to five times a year—except in extreme cases of bleach, chemical, or heat damage. Medium-texture hair is also the easiest kind to cut, so it's less about scissor technique (every technique can work with this texture) and more about what flatters your face shape. One style you can't go wrong with: "Long layers," says Wandrey. "Just avoid cutting layers at chin length, because that can make your face look rounder"—unless you want to soften sharp features.

COLOR

"Women with medium hair textures can usually go six to eight weeks before needing a touch-up," says Black. You should still avoid pulling the color through from roots to tips every time, however. "Otherwise the ends can get inky," says Anderson. Highlights can be touched up every 6 to 10 weeks. Medium-texture hair is still prone to breakage, so make sure to incorporate a strengthening hair mask into your routine at least once a week.

medium/ normal hair

WASH

Because the diameter of each strand is bigger than that of fine hair, you're less likely to notice oil, says Kingsley. "Wash every two to three days," she says, "with a product labeled for daily use, like ① **Clear Scalp & Hair Total Care Shampoo and** ② **Conditioner** [$6 each at drugstores]." They are designed to be used regularly, so you don't have to worry about weighing hair down, says Wandrey.

STYLE

Go with a product that's going to get your desired styling results—whether that's sleek and straight, beachy waves, or curls. When in doubt, use a mousse, such as ③ **Matrix Style Link Volume Builder Mousse** ($18, ulta.com). "It will make hair feel soft while adding body all over if you're blowing it out, or help bring out natural bends if you air-dry," says Wandrey.

thick/coarse hair

WASH

"This type of hair is often drier because it has the least amount of oil glands and the largest diameter," says Kingsley. The good news: It also means you can go the longest between shampoos. "Wash once or twice a week, and make sure you lather twice if it's been a whole week between shampoos," says Wandrey. Use something labeled as moisturizing, like ① **Caviar Alterna Haircare Moisture Intense Oil Crème Shampoo and** ② **Conditioner** ($32 each, sephora.com). "They often contain oils like jojoba, coconut, or argan, which sink in and restore moisture," says Nawrot.

CUT

Get a cut every 12 to 16 weeks, and at every other appointment, ask your stylist to remove bulk from your hair. "Doing it at every appointment could make your hair look and feel too thin," warns Wandrey. Also, try to keep it on the longer side. Styles that are shorter than shoulder length require more maintenance in a daily styling routine, as this texture looks best smooth and shaped.

STYLE

Heavier styling creams, like ③ **R+Co Jackpot Styling Crème** ($25, randco.com), and oils, like ④ **Dessange Paris Oleo Miracle Replenishing Oil** ($12, target.com), are your best bet. "Start with a dime-size amount and add more as needed," says Wandrey. This will help add moisture and shine and also define the texture.

COLOR

"Coarse hair tends to be naturally dark, so regrowth can be very noticeable," says Black. Color as often as you need to—every two to four weeks if you have severe grays, or every six to eight weeks for highlights. "If you're using a semi- or demipermanent formula, pull the color all the way through to your ends every time to get a boost of shine," says Anderson. Keep in mind that coarse hair can be very dry, so incorporate a hydrating mask into your regular routine to prolong your color's vibrancy.

NORMAL

HAIR HACK:
To make your blow-out last longer, separate your hair into two sections, then loosely twist them into buns before going to sleep. Shake loose in the morning.

HAIR BY RODNEY GROVES FOR ORIBE HAIRCARE AT RAY BROWN PRO; MAKEUP BY LEANNE HIRSH FOR WWW.PERFUMERACURANDERA.COM; MANICURES BY SOFIA SHUSTEROV USING CHANEL LE VERNIS FOR JUDY CASEY INC.; STYLING BY JENNIFER SMITH.

LOCAL GIVING Just a few (!) of the caring friends and neighbors who have helped the Santos family (center) through seriously difficult times.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR **FRIENDS**

Some people face more than their share of hardship. The Santos family of Cold Spring, New York, suffered three harsh blows in as many years. Their neighbors' response shows what it really means to take care of your own—and how to help someone get by with...well, you know.

Written by Maria Ricapito
Photograph by Katherine Wolkoff

ON MAY 18, 2015, at 3:30 P.M., Melissa Santos smelled smoke in an upstairs bedroom of her home, one of the many small wood-frame buildings lining the streets of Cold Spring, New York. Her kids, twins Darrin and Daniel, 11, and daughter Mikayla, 9, were downstairs. Moving fast, Melissa hustled everyone out of the house, someone scooping up their little dog, Poncho, on the way. Minutes later, flames were spilling out of upstairs windows. Neighbors came running; fire trucks and police cars showed up. Melissa's husband, Darrin, notified at work an hour away, zoomed toward home.

You wouldn't wish a fire on anyone. But for the Santos family, this disaster was the third in a string of tragedies. One year earlier, on May 10, 2014, Darrin's father and stepmother, Michael and Helen Santos, were in their car on the main road in Cold Spring when a drunk driver hit them head-on. Michael's back was broken, and his pelvis shattered; he fell into a coma. Helen was killed. The family was devastated.

This terrible loss came while Melissa was two years into treatment for cancer. In 2012 doctors had seen lesions on Melissa's spine. It was multiple myeloma. She endured two painful stem-cell transplants, high doses of chemotherapy, and weeks in the hospital. Her treatment is ongoing.

With so much pain and loss, you might think that Melissa would complain. "Are you kidding me?" she says. "We're lucky." She counts early detection—the doctors saw the lesions while conducting a scan for an unrelated back injury—among her blessings.

Even the timing of the fire had some good fortune to it, according to Melissa. Her daughter's 10th birthday party was set for that weekend. "From me still being here three years after my diagnosis to the fire happening just before I had a houseful of kids, I don't think we're unlucky," says Melissa. "Look where we live. Look at the people we know."

TOWN SPIRIT

Established in 1846 on the banks of the Hudson River, about 60 miles north of New York City, Cold Spring grew up around the West Point Foundry, named after the Military Academy across the river. Seasons revolve around Little League, football, the high school play, and tourists (leaf-peepers, antiques-seeker, hikers). It's a beautiful setting, but it's not all Norman Rockwell. On the community Facebook page, where people trade traffic updates, handyman recommendations, and even perennials (my pachysandra for your purple irises), vicious, exasperated comments pop up. Town meetings can devolve into acrimony when it comes to paving dirt roads or developing the old hospital site. When a Dunkin' Donuts joined the quaint, largely historic townscape, some were up in arms. But unity prevails when it matters: "Anytime someone is in trouble," says Leonora Burton, proprietor of the Country Goose gift shop, which has been on Main Street for 30 years, "everyone gathers around to help."

The firefighters did more than just tame the blaze. Says Melissa Santos: "They tried to save as much of our stuff as they could. They took our pictures off the wall. They found my wedding ring, my cell phone, our filing cabinet. They even grabbed the kids' cleats."

THIS PAGE: The Santos family on the stoop of their house, which is awaiting demolition. Clockwise from top left: Darrin Jr. and Daniel, both 11; Darrin Sr., who works as a hospital transportation supervisor; Mikayla, 10; Poncho the family's chihuahua mix; and Melissa. OPPOSITE: The kids and Poncho relax behind their temporary home—a one-bedroom guesthouse in the yard of neighbors Maria and Robert Leiter.

SPRINGING INTO ACTION

When the fire hit, it was a classic case of all hands on deck. Neighbors began doing whatever they could the minute they realized their friends were in trouble. Maria Leiter, who lives down the street, saw the Santos kids sitting on the lawn next door watching their home burn. She swept them off to her house (along with Poncho, who was running loose and very upset), where her own three children had been awaiting dinner and gave everyone pizza.

An acquaintance who lives in a neighboring town, Tina Landolfi, thought of the medications Melissa was using to treat her cancer, all gone now as the house blazed. "Tina was so calm," Melissa recalls. "She was like, 'OK, what's your doctor's number?' She called it all in and went and picked it up for me."

Drug World, the town pharmacy, did what it could, too, on that terrible day. With the blessing of owner Heidi Snyder, Sharon Penik, a manager of the Cold Spring store, rushed up and down the aisles

putting together a "medicine cabinet"—toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo—for the Santoses and asked Tina to get it to the family, wherever it was they would be staying.

As for that, Maria Leiter knew exactly where the Santoses would stay—in her guesthouse. "It was a no-brainer," she says. "Melissa is the best person. She does for everybody. So I said they could have the cottage for as long as they needed it." Leiter, a nurse, didn't even check first with husband, Robert, an architectural-lighting designer. She knew that he would feel the same.

BRAVE HEARTS

Meanwhile, the firefighters, almost all volunteer—from the local Cold Spring Fire Company, plus contingents from nearby Fishkill, Putnam Valley, North Highlands, and Garrison—were doing more than just taming the blaze. As water gushed into the house, "they were taking my pictures off the wall," says Melissa. "They found my wedding ring, my cell phone, our filing cabinet [of important documents]. They were trying to save as much of our stuff as they could. They cared." Volunteer firefighter Kristin Van Tassel, a family friend, saw something critical to the boys' football/baseball/lacrosse life in the hallway. "She grabbed their cleats, because they're expensive," says Melissa. "She took them home and washed and dried them for us."

SUPPORT FROM ALL SIDES

Those were just drops in the wave of help beginning to wash over the family. Everyone worked individually and in concert, stepping up to do whatever they could. The next day, Van Tassel started a GoFundMe campaign that hit $10,000 within a week. A local food pantry invited Melissa to come stock up on staples. Melissa was too upset to do much those first few days, so friends Mindy Krazmien, Luisa Salazar, and Brenda Miller helped transfer salvaged belongings to the temporary

The right kind of help

Not sure what do to—and what *not* to do—when a friend or a neighbor is in crisis? Christie Wrightson, a senior associate of disaster mental health at the American Red Cross, in Washington, D.C., offers do's and don'ts for making your concern count.

DON'T chime in with a wishy-washy "If there's anything I can do..." Offer solid, substantial, tangible help—like walking a dog or housing a cat until life settles down. Kids do well with a routine, so consider offering after-school pickups for a few weeks.

DO try to find out if there's a meal schedule you can get in on. And if you put one together, ask friends about any dietary concerns, like a low-sodium diet or lactose intolerance.

DON'T unload all your castoffs. Unless the survivors specifically ask for clothes from you or your kids, avoid giving them. If items don't fit or aren't to their taste, the recipients then have to spend time sorting through and disposing of your attempt to help.

DO give gift cards for places where shoppers can maximize their money (Costco, Target, etc.). Pick stores that offer a variety of merchandise, from home goods to clothing to food.

DON'T give cash. When people are in an unsettled situation, some don't feel comfortable carrying around large amounts. That's when Visa or American Express gift cards come in handy—or gift cards to local restaurants.

DO ask the family before starting a crowdfunding effort. Be sure to work with a credible hosting site. You can check with the Better Business Bureau (bbb.org), or just go with a popular site, such as CrowdRise.com or GoFundMe.com, which allows the recipient to withdraw money before a goal is reached.

(CONTINUED)

DO support and enable de-stressing, if you can. Normal day-to-day self-care, like a workout, can fall by the wayside for those in crisis and can make a difference. Offer a ride to yoga class or volunteer to babysit to allow someone time for a run.

DON'T feel as if you have to solve every problem. A willing ear, compassion, and empathy might be what's really needed. Sometimes you just need to listen.

DON'T tell the person in crisis what she has to be thankful for or compare her situation with someone else's. Also not recommended: talking about God's will or karma. Even telling someone, "Everything is going to be fine," can feel undermining, because it minimizes people's feelings.

DO learn from someone else's misfortune and make a plan. Talk to your family about what to do in case of a fire or a natural disaster. An app for kids on the Red Cross website makes a game out of prepping. Go to redcross.org/monsterguard.

If you want to contribute to the Santos family, you can do so at gofundme.com/uy58h4v.

house. Pal Maria Cofini did laundry for the Santoses. Another friend, Chrissy Colasurdo, started looking for a larger space where the family could stay (the search continues).

FOOD AND SHELTER

The morning after the fire, Melissa met the contractor sent by her insurance company at the charred house. The place was surrounded by police tape. She watched as a blue tarp was nailed over the ruined roof and plywood set to fill gaping blackened windows. A local architect, Jamie Copeland of Hudson Design, had already offered to donate his services and advise the family on how fast different options, from new construction to modular units, would get them back home.

Lucia Grandetti, a Cold Spring homemaker and day-care provider, works on the meal program for the PTA's Heartfelt Committee and Our Lady of Loretto's Good Samaritans Committee, a small circle of volunteers who cook and deliver meals to families in need. "We were there for Melissa's cancer diagnosis and when her mother-in-law was killed," says Lucia. "After the fire, we did it again," she says. Grandetti arranged everything by phone rather than e-mail, which would have been much quicker. "I feel like it's so much easier for people to say no to the computer than to say no to me," she says.

DONATIONS BY THE DOZENS

The outpouring was incredible and involved every segment of the community. Countless neighbors—more than we can mention here—pitched in to help. Leonora Burton put a little canister by the cash register in her gift shop with a sign, FOR THE SANTOS FAMILY. "I just know everybody," she says. "I posted on Facebook, and people just started coming in with checks and cash and clothes." Local artist Russ Cusick posted photos of one of his Hudson River landscapes on a local Facebook page and said it would go to the first person to write a $300 check to the Santoses. Former coworkers of Melissa's raised $1,000 for the family selling dinners at their office. The twins' lacrosse team replaced equipment and uniforms that were lost in the blaze. A few months later, the coaches, parents, and kids in the club, also known as the Philipstown Lacrosse Association for Youth (PLAY), donated a whopping $5,000 to the Santoses, raised throughout the year and at an annual benefit. Danielle Pack McCarthy, a Little League mom, "went out and got the boys chest protectors," says Melissa. Van Tassel, the friend and firefighter who had rescued the kids' cleats, went back and salvaged and dried out their soaked baseball gloves.

Cold Spring kids took action: Entrepreneurial schoolmates Dylan Gunther (who was in Daniel's sixth-grade class), John Dwyer, Patrick Reinhardt, and Graeme McGrath set up a lemonade stand one Saturday to hit up hikers getting off the train. Mrs. Windels's (and Mikayla's) class at Haldane Elementary School, along with the rest of the fourth grade, held a walkathon. "The kids raised a dollar a lap," says Melissa. "They were so eager, they were running. One kid did 25 laps. I stayed to the very end, because I wanted to make sure they all knew how much I appreciated it."

And then there were helpers who preferred to stay below the radar. Says Melissa, "This one person, what she did really touched my heart. She sent a letter explaining that she had made a pact with herself after the Newtown, Connecticut, shooting." In honor of the 26 people killed—20 children and six adults—this woman, who asked to remain nameless, vowed to save $26 of every paycheck and give the total to the next family she knew who found themselves in need. When Melissa read the letter aloud, "even my husband was crying." Of the four-digit contribution also inside the envelope, he said, "It's too much." He talked about giving it back. Later, when Melissa bumped into the generous donor and began to thank her, "she said that she didn't want to make a big deal about it. I thought that was just amazing."

GRATITUDE ATTITUDE In spite of all the setbacks, Melissa Santos says she feels lucky: "The community reached out and just enveloped us."

"Melissa is the best person," says neighbor Maria Leiter. "She does for everybody. The Santoses can stay in our cottage as long as they need."

HOME ON THE HORIZON

Investigators spent hours searching for the cause of the fire but were not able to find one. When all the insurance funds come through, the house will be demolished and a new one built. Darrin Sr. looks forward to having a man cave in the basement. Meanwhile, the Santos family continues to live in the Leiter cottage. They sleep in an open sleeping loft, on three double mattresses. (Insurance will reimburse for rent, which will go to the Leiters.)

The kids walk the few blocks to play basketball in their driveway—the curbside hoop was untouched by the fire. Mikayla, whose birthday sleepover was derailed by the fire, is now rich in teddy bears. "She must have been talking about it—I was so distraught I don't remember," says Melissa of the cherished bear from Mikayla's great-grandmother that was lost. "But one day she said, 'Mom, I'm getting teddy bears like crazy.'"

Melissa is not in remission but is controlling the cancer with chemo meds. "I think I'm at almost a hundred percent, but I'm still recuperating from these transplants, because they take so much out of you." As the stay-at-home adult in the family, she takes care of the kids and ferries her father-in-law, Michael, to his many medical appointments and physical-therapy sessions—fallout from the terrible accident that took his wife.

Over the past few months, neighbors like Diana Stenzel, whose backyard trees were burned brown by the leaping flames, have helped clear debris from the Santoses' yard and kept the lawn mowed.

Melissa, after all she's been through, continues to exude gratitude. "The community reached out and just enveloped us," she says. "Everybody's like, 'Are you going to relocate?' I say, 'Are you kidding me? No way.' I'm never leaving. I love our little town." She pauses. "The neighbors are amazing."

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Food

Quick Cooking (169, 173, 179, 204, 214)
Healthy Pick (179, 202, 204, 214)
Freezable (200, 207)
Make Ahead (167, 169, 173, 174, 179, 180, 200, 207, 214, 221)
Big Batch (167, 169, 173, 174, 179, 180, 200)
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One Pot (169, 173, 179, 200, 202, 207, 214)
Whole-Grain (214, 221)
Vegetarian (169, 173, 174, 179, 180, 207, 214, 221)
Gluten-Free (167, 169, 173, 179, 199, 202, 214)

EAT PASTE
Tomato, that is. This concentrated ingredient is full of glutamates (the *G* in MSG), which deepen the flavor of Slow Cooker Shepherd's Pie (page 200).

MAKE A HEAD
Red (or purple) cabbage turns earthy and sweet when roasted (page 202).

TURN OVER A NEW LEAF
Instead of kale or spinach, try stirring hearty, nutrient-rich collard greens into your soup (like the white bean and barley on page 207).

Photographs by Con Poulos
Food Styling by Frances Boswell

PROP STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART

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Slow Cooker
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EASY DINNER

1

Spiced chicken breasts with lentil and radicchio salad

HANDS-ON TIME **25 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **50 MINUTES** SERVES **4**

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken breast halves (about 2½ pounds)
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 cup dried green lentils
- ½ small head radicchio, thinly sliced (about 2 cups)
- 2 clementines, peeled and sliced crosswise, plus 3 tablespoons juice
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves, plus more for serving
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon tahini

HEAT oven to 450° F. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Season the chicken with the coriander and ¾ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cook, skin-side down, until the skin is golden brown and crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Flip the chicken and transfer the pan to oven. Cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the thickest breast (avoiding bone) registers 165° F, 22 to 25 minutes.

MEANWHILE, cook the lentils according to the package directions; drain and cool slightly. Toss in a large bowl with the radicchio, clementine slices, cilantro, 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

WHISK the yogurt, tahini, clementine juice, the remaining tablespoon of olive oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a small bowl.

SERVE the chicken and salad drizzled with the dressing and topped with additional cilantro.

FOOD

Recipes by Lindsay Hunt

NUTRITION
Get details on fat, calories, and sodium at the bottom of each recipe on RealSimple.com.

- ( ) Quick Cooking
- ( ) Healthy Pick
- (x) Freezable
- (x) Make Ahead
- (x) Big Batch
- (x) Slow Cooker
- (x) One Pot
- ( ) Whole-Grain
- ( ) Vegetarian
- ( ) Gluten-Free

EASY DINNER

2

Slow-cooker shepherd's pie

HANDS-ON TIME **20 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **5 HOURS, 20 MINUTES TO 8 HOURS, 20 MINUTES** SERVES **6**

- 1½ pounds beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth
- 1 cup dark beer (such as Guinness)
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 large russet potatoes, peeled
- 2 cups frozen peas
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

COMBINE the beef, carrots, onion, broth, beer, Worcestershire, tomato paste, flour, 1½ teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Nestle the potatoes in the liquid.

COVER and cook until the potatoes are tender, on low for 7 to 8 hours or on high for 4 to 5 hours. Transfer the potatoes to a medium bowl. Stir the peas into the stew, cover, and warm until heated through, 2 to 3 minutes.

MASH the potatoes with the milk, butter, and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl.

SERVE the stew topped with the mashed potatoes.

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- ( ) Quick Cooking
- (x) Healthy Pick
- ( ) Freezable
- ( ) Make Ahead
- ( ) Big Batch
- ( ) Slow Cooker
- (x) One Pot
- ( ) Whole-Grain
- ( ) Vegetarian
- (x) Gluten-Free

EASY DINNER

3

Pork tenderloin with roasted sweet potatoes and cabbage

HANDS-ON TIME **20 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **50 MINUTES** SERVES **4**

FOOD

- 2 sweet potatoes, cut into 1½-inch wedges (1½ pounds)
- 1 small head purple cabbage (about 1½ pounds), cut into 4 wedges through the core
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds, crushed
- 1½ pounds boneless pork tenderloin
- Dijon mustard, for serving
- Chopped parsley, for serving

HEAT oven to 450° F.

TOSS the sweet potatoes and cabbage with the olive oil and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper on a rimmed baking sheet.

COMBINE the fennel, caraway, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl. Coat the pork with the spice mixture and nestle in the vegetables.

ROAST until the internal temperature of the pork registers 145° F, 20 to 25 minutes, and the vegetables are tender. Let rest for 5 minutes; slice.

SERVE the pork and vegetables with the mustard, sprinkled with the parsley.

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~~3 chicken breast halves, cubed~~
~~2 tbsps. butter, divided~~
~~2 cloves garlic, minced, divided~~
~~2 tbsps. chopped flat-leaf parsley~~
~~1 1/2 tsps. Italian seasoning~~
~~1/2 onion, diced~~
~~1 1/2 tsps. salt~~
~~1/2 tsp. ground white pepper~~
8 oz. pasta, cooked, drained
2 cups heavy cream
2 tsp. Cajun seasoning
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

1. Prepare pasta according to package directions; drain and set aside.

Sauté sausage for 5 minutes.

2. ~~Cook chicken in butter, season with salt, white pepper and Italian seasoning in a large skillet over medium-high heat until chicken is no longer pink. Stir in onion and parsley; cook until onions are transparent.~~

3. Add ~~garlic cloves~~, cream and Cajun seasoning and boil. Reduce heat; simmer 3–4 mins. or until mixture begins to thicken. Stir in Parmesan. Add pasta and toss.

Great additions are peas, tomatoes or any of your favorite vegetables. Just stir them in and simmer.

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EASY DINNER

4

Shrimp and broccolini stir-fry with sesame rice

HANDS-ON TIME **30 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **30 MINUTES** SERVES **4**

FOOD

- 1 cup jasmine or long-grain white rice
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds, plus more for serving
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 pound peeled and deveined large shrimp (raw)
- 1 bunch scallions, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger (from a 2-inch piece)
- 1 small fresh red chili, finely chopped
- 1 large bunch broccolini, cut into 2-inch pieces (about 10 ounces)
- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- ¼ cup soy sauce

COOK the rice according to the package directions. Stir in the sesame seeds.

MEANWHILE, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp and cook, stirring often, until opaque throughout, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate; reserve the skillet.

ADD the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the reserved skillet. Add the scallions, garlic, ginger, and chili. Cook, stirring often, until the scallions are tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the broccolini and ½ cup water. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the broccolini is crisp-tender, 3 to 5 minutes.

STIR in the reserved shrimp, vinegar, and soy sauce and cook, tossing frequently, until the sauce coats the shrimp and broccolini, 2 to 3 minutes.

SERVE the shrimp and broccolini over the rice, sprinkled with additional sesame seeds.

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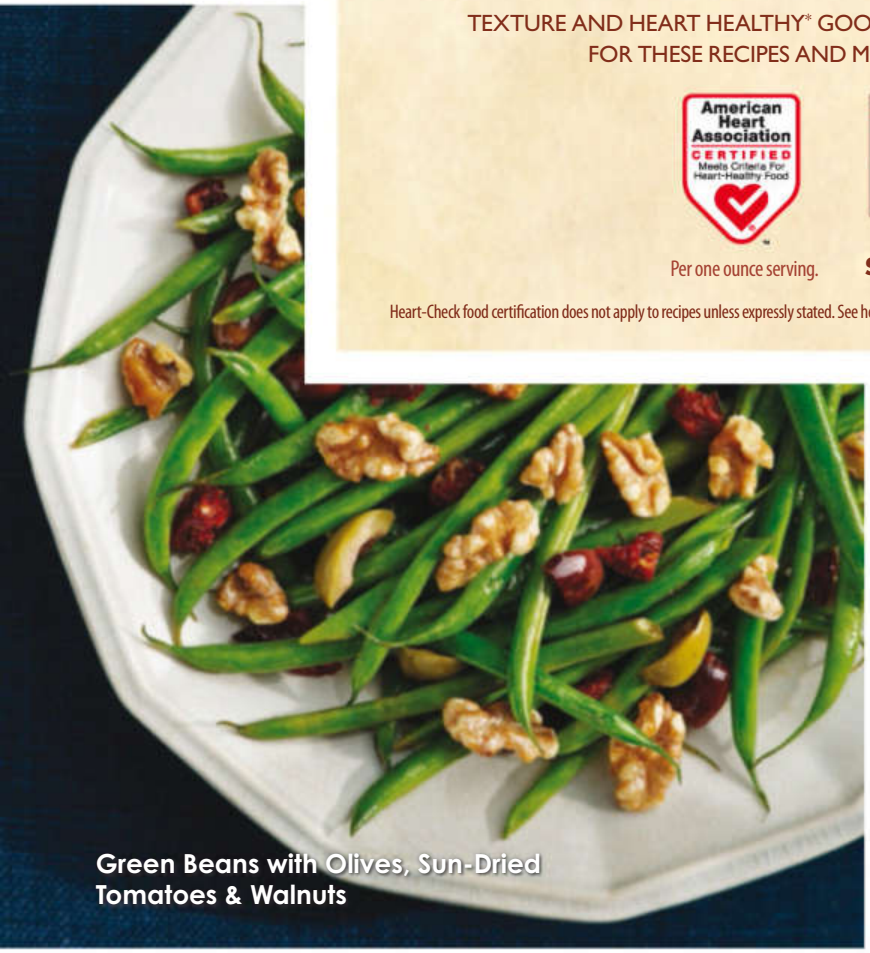

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1 tsp. **McCormick Ground Black Pepper**
1 tsp. salt

PLACE turkey on rack in roasting pan. Brush with oil. Mix seasonings in small bowl. Sprinkle seasoning mixture evenly over turkey. Cover loosely with heavy duty foil.

ROAST in preheated 325°F oven 2 hours, adding an extra 15 minutes per pound for larger turkeys. Remove foil. Roast 1 hour longer or until internal temperature in thigh reaches 165°F, basting occasionally with pan juices. Remove turkey from oven. Let stand 20 minutes. Reserve pan juices to make gravy or to serve with turkey.

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- Vegetarian
- Gluten-Free

EASY DINNER

5

White bean and barley soup with tomatoes and greens

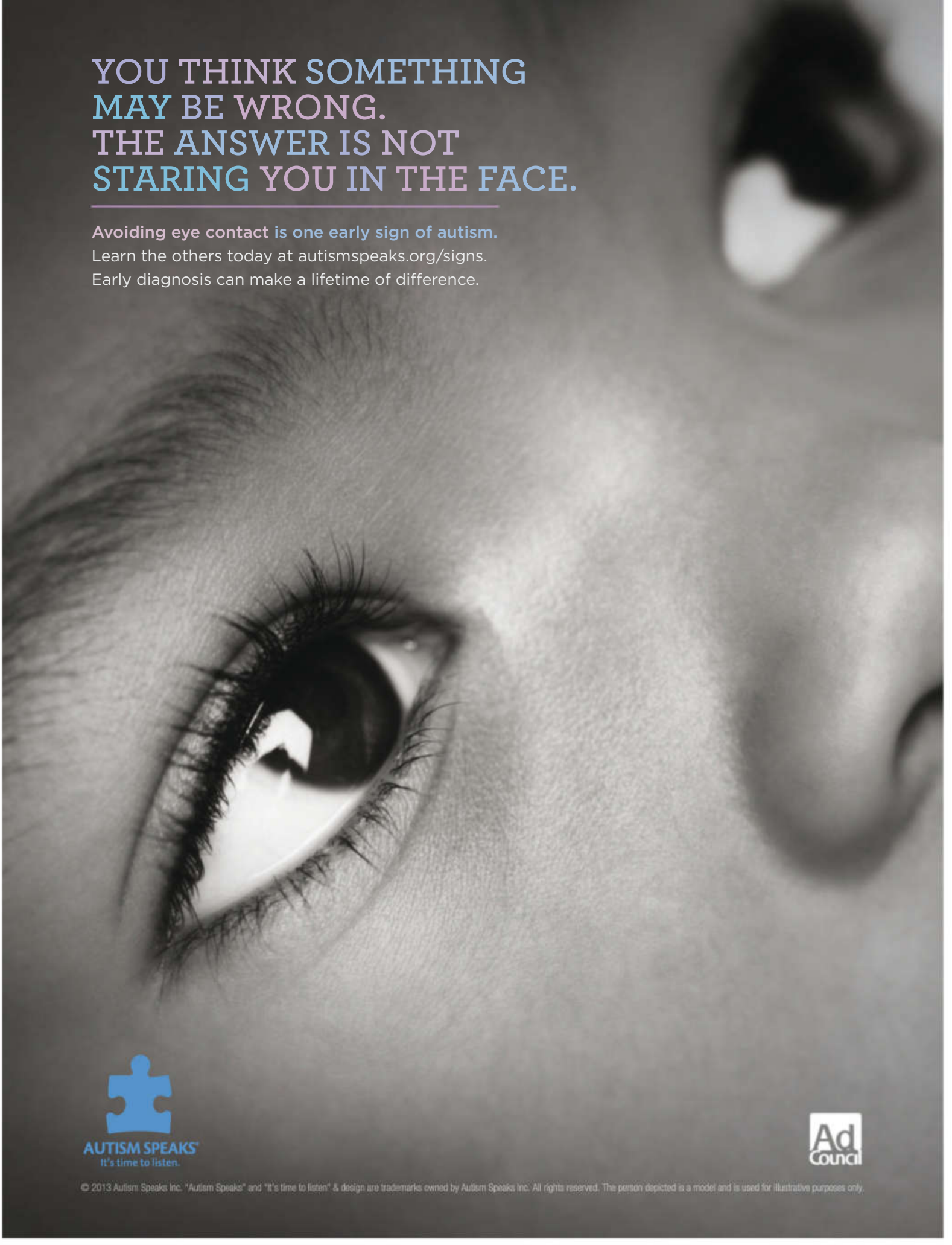
HANDS-ON TIME **25 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **45 MINUTES** SERVES **4**

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for serving
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed
- 1 cup pearl barley, rinsed
- 1 small bunch collard greens or kale, stems discarded and leaves cut into strips (4 cups)
- 1 15-ounce can cannellini beans, rinsed
- ½ cup finely grated Parmesan (about 2 ounces), plus more for serving

HEAT the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the broth and tomatoes with their juices and bring to a boil. Add the barley, reduce heat, and simmer until the barley is tender, about 20 minutes.

ADD the collards or kale and the beans and cook until the greens are wilted and the beans are heated through, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the Parmesan and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

SERVE the soup drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with additional Parmesan.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Written by Chris Morocco
Reporting by Heath Goldman
Photographs by Victor Prado

FOOD STYLING BY CHRIS MOROCCO

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Trader Joe's Organic Beef Broth

In a category full of bitter, salty, or artificially caramel-colored duds, this winner balanced genuine beef flavor with a smooth aftertaste.

TO BUY: $2.50 for 32 ounces, at supermarkets.

BEST VEGETABLE

365 Organic Vegetable Broth

Carrots, onion, celery, and mushrooms are cooked down into a tasty, multilayered base sure to make any vegetarian soup satisfying.

TO BUY: $2.50 for 32 ounces, at supermarkets.

EXPERT ADVICE

More robust and gamey than chicken stock, turkey stock is a quick way to add complexity to soups, rissotos, or even stewed dark leafy greens.

BEST TURKEY

Williams-Sonoma Turkey Stock Concentrate

Pricey, yes, but this potent potion makes up to 1 gallon of hearty stock when diluted with water. Only need a cup for gravy? The opened jar will last for 6 months in the refrigerator. Do the math!

TO BUY: $20 for 6 ounces, Williams-Sonoma.

BEST LOW-SODIUM VEGETABLE

Pacific Simply Organic Unsalted Vegetable Stock

Six ingredients (including water) give this entry a fresh, just-made flavor. Bonus: The small container (a quarter of the size of most) is easy to use up without waste.

TO BUY: $1.80 for 8 ounces, at supermarkets.

BEST CHICKEN

Swanson Chicken Stock

This pick has a pleasant umami finish, thanks to a higher concentration of chicken (not additives) than others have.

TO BUY: $3 for 26 ounces, at supermarkets.

LIQUID GOLD
Go to realsimple.com/broth for 10 great recipes to put broth to use.

CHEESECAKE with Pumpkin Spice and EVERYTHING NICE

SPICED PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE

Prep Time: 30 min. | Total Time: 7 hours 15 min. (incl. refrigerating) | Makes: 16 servings

WHAT YOU NEED

- 24 gingersnaps (2 inch)
- 3/4 cup PLANTERS Pecans
- 4 pkgs. (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin
- 1 Tbsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 eggs
- 1-1/2 Tbsp. honey

MAKE IT

HEAT oven to 325°F.

USE pulsing action of food processor to process gingersnaps and 1/4 cup nuts until finely crushed. Press into bottom of 9-inch springform pan.

BEAT cream cheese and sugar in large bowl with mixer until blended. Add pumpkin, spice and vanilla; mix well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, mixing on low speed after each just until blended. Pour over crust.

BAKE 1 hour 20 min. to 1 hour 30 min. or until center is almost set. Loosen cake from rim of pan; cool before removing rim. Refrigerate cheesecake 4 hours.

COOK honey and remaining nuts in skillet on medium-high heat 5 min. or just until honey is foamy and nut mixture is heated through, stirring frequently. Spread onto baking sheet sprayed with cooking spray; use fork to separate nuts slightly. Cool completely.

TOP cheesecake with glazed nuts before serving.

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Inner beauty

The pomegranate's ruby-like seeds are called arils. (How pretty is that?) They can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen in a single layer on a tray, then stored for up to 6 months in an airtight container. The arils often shrivel when thawed, but they're still great for blending in smoothies or tossing in salads.

MORE JUICY BITS
Find creative uses for the colorful seeds at realsimple.com/pomegranate.

Thick skinned

A ripe pomegranate should feel heavy in your hand, since its seeds are loaded with juice. The leathery skin should be firm and taut, with a light pink to deep red color. Store whole, unpeeled pomegranates at room temperature for about 1 week or in the refrigerator (wrapped in plastic) for up to 2 months.

POMEGRANATE

There may be no fruit more lovely—and annoying—than the pomegranate. Peeling and seeding is tedious (for help, turn to page 218), but the payoff is huge. One fruit can yield hundreds of seeds. (There's a reason it's a symbol of fertility and abundance in many cultures.) Stir the seeds into dips, salsas, and sangria—or, yes, pop them satisfyingly into your mouth. Pomegranate seeds are high in fiber and potassium, but the crimson color and the sweet-tart flavor are the real draws. Pomegranates are available only in the fall and early winter, from September to January, so grab them while you can. And wear an apron.

Recipes by Lindsay Hunt
Written by Sarah Copeland
Photographs by Levi Brown
Food Styling by Michelle Gatton

1

Brussels sprouts, sweet potato, and pomegranate seed salad

Toss 1 peeled and chopped large **SWEET POTATO** with 2 Tbsp. **OLIVE OIL,** plus **SALT** and **PEPPER.** Roast at 425° F until tender, 15 to 18 min. Toss ¾ lb. thinly sliced **BRUSSELS SPROUTS** with 3 Tbsp. each **OLIVE OIL** and **SHERRY VINEGAR,** plus salt and pepper. Toss with the sweet potatoes, ½ cup each toasted **PECANS** and **POMEGRANATE SEEDS,** and **RICOTTA SALATA.** SERVES **4**

2

Spiced rum and cider sangria with pomegranate seeds

Bring ⅓ cup each **PURE MAPLE SYRUP** and **WATER** to a boil in a small saucepan with 1 **CINNAMON STICK,** 2 **CLOVES,** and a pinch of **GRATED NUTMEG.** Let cool; discard the cinnamon stick and cloves. Combine with 2½ cups chilled **HARD APPLE CIDER,** 1 cup chilled **DARK RUM,** ½ cup **POMEGRANATE SEEDS,** ½ chopped **GREEN APPLE,** and 6 halved **ORANGE SLICES.** Serve chilled. SERVES **4**

3

Granola bowl with pomegranate seeds, pear, and toasted coconut

Whisk ½ cup **LIGHT COCONUT MILK** or **MILK,** ¼ tsp. **PURE VANILLA EXTRACT,** and a pinch of **CINNAMON.** Pour over ½ cup **GRANOLA** and 1 chopped small **PEAR.** Top with 2 Tbsp. each **POMEGRANATE SEEDS** and toasted **COCONUT FLAKES** and 1 Tbsp. roasted **PUMPKIN SEEDS.** SERVES **1**

4

Rice pudding with banana, pomegranate seeds, and caramel

Bring 1 cup **ARBORIO RICE,** ¼ cup **SUGAR,** 1 tsp. **PURE VANILLA EXTRACT,** 2 cups each **WATER** and **MILK,** and ¼ teaspoon **SALT** to a boil in a medium pot. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the rice is tender, 25 to 35 min. Top with sliced **BANANA, POMEGRANATE SEEDS,** and warmed **CARAMEL.** SERVES **4**

5

Roasted chicken and fennel with pomegranate seed salsa

Toss 1½ lbs. skinless, boneless **CHICKEN THIGHS** and 2 heads **FENNEL** (cut into 8 wedges) with 2 Tbsp. **OLIVE OIL** and **SALT** and **PEPPER.** Roast at 450° F until the chicken is cooked and the fennel is tender, 30 minutes. Combine ¼ cup **POMEGRANATE SEEDS,** 2 chopped **SCALLIONS,** and 2 Tbsp. each toasted **PINE NUTS,** olive oil, and **LIME JUICE.** Season with salt and pepper. Serve with the chicken and fennel. SERVES **4**

6

Feta and white bean dip with pomegranate seeds

Puree 1 14.5-ounce can **CANNELLINI BEANS** (rinsed), 3 ounces crumbled **FETA** (about ½ cup), and 2 Tbsp. each **PLAIN GREEK YOGURT, OLIVE OIL,** and **LEMON JUICE,** plus **SALT** and **PEPPER.** Top with ¼ cup **POMEGRANATE SEEDS** and 1 Tbsp. chopped **PARSLEY.** Drizzle with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and salt and pepper. Serve with **PITA CHIPS.** SERVES **4**

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HOMEMADE PIZZA IN 30!

30-MINUTE PIZZA CRUST

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1¾ to 2¼ cups flour
- 1 packet Fleischmann's® RapidRise™ Yeast
- 1½ tsp sugar
- ¾ tsp salt
- ⅔ cup very warm water (120°F to 130°F)
- 3 tbsp oil
- ½ to 1 cup pizza sauce
- 1 to 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- Other toppings as desired

PREHEAT oven to 425° to get started!

1. COMBINE 1 cup flour, 1 packet Fleischmann's® RapidRise™ Yeast, 1½ tsp sugar, and ¾ tsp salt in a large bowl. **ADD** ⅔ cup very warm water (120° to 130°F, use a thermometer) and 3 tbsp oil. **MIX** ingredients together until well blended. **GRADUALLY ADD** ½ cup flour until dough forms a ball. **ADD** additional flour, if needed, to handle. **SPOON** dough onto floured surface. (Dough will be slightly sticky.)

2. KNEAD dough until it is smooth and elastic; about 4 minutes. **COVER** with kitchen towel and let rest for 10 minutes.

3. ROLL out dough. **PRESS** dough into a greased pizza pan. Top with pizza sauce, cheese and toppings.

4. BAKE on the lowest rack for 12 to 15 minutes, until the crust browns.

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Things Cooks Know

Simplifying strategies, techniques, and tips—from the *Real Simple* test kitchen to yours

EASY NOW Vigorous rolling can create a tough crust. If your dough doesn't give easily under moderate pressure, let it sit at room temperature for 10 minutes and try again.

Why pie dough needs to rest

Tender, flaky, crisp, and golden brown. Most people agree on what a prize-winning piecrust should look and taste like. But their methods of achieving that are all over the map. Except for this part: The dough should rest in the refrigerator before you roll it out. Chilling for even 30 minutes gives the butter in the dough time to firm up, which helps produce flaky, tender layers. (Butter that melts or gets too soft during rolling results in a crumbly, mealy crust.) Resting also helps the water to distribute evenly. When you first add it to the flour and butter, the mixture forms clumps that get pressed into a thick round. After resting, those clumps fuse into a smooth disk that rolls out easily without cracking.

THE TRICK TO EVENLY SEASONED MEAT AND VEGETABLES

Salt and pepper are the ultimate flavor-enhancers, which is why you want to use them properly and with gusto. To season food like a pro, place your meat or vegetables on a flat work surface (like a baking sheet) and hold your hand 12 inches above the food as you scatter the seasoning generously (more than you would think!) back and forth over the top. Afterward, flip the food and roll it around in any salt and pepper that landed on the work surface to make sure it's evenly coated on both sides.

Written by Heath Goldman and Chris Morocco
Illustrations by Melinda Josie

The fastest way to seed a pomegranate

Instead of buying the packaged seeds, which are more expensive and less fresh, try this three-step method for the whole fruit. Enjoy the seeds in salads, dips, or cocktails. (See page 213.)

STEP 1: Score a circle about 2 inches below the crown with a sharp paring knife. Grip the knob on top of the crown and carefully peel away the circle of skin.

STEP 2: You will expose 4 to 6 sections of seeds that are divided by a white membrane. Score the skin between each section, using the membrane as a guide. (The skin thickens into a slight ridge where it meets the membrane.)

STEP 3: Pull the bulk of the membrane right out. Using both hands, pry the sections open. Remove the shreds of membrane that cling to the outside of each section, then scoop out the seeds with a spoon.

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Baked oatmeal with cranberries and almonds

Like a casserole-cookie hybrid (and healthier than leftover pie), this make-ahead whole-grain dish will toatally feed a crowd.

Photograph by Con Poulos
Food Styling by Frances Boswell
Recipe by Lindsay Hunt

- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled, plus more for the pan
- 2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- ¾ cup almonds, toasted and chopped
- ⅓ cup dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Fine salt
- 1¾ cups whole milk
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- ⅓ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- Heavy cream or milk, for serving (optional)

TIP: Toast raw almonds in a 350° F oven on a rimmed baking sheet until fragrant and golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool before chopping.

HEAT oven to 350° F.

BUTTER a 2-quart baking dish.

COMBINE the oats, almonds, cranberries, cinnamon, and ½ teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Stir in the melted butter, milk, eggs, maple syrup, and vanilla. Mix well and spread evenly in the prepared dish.

BAKE until golden and the center is firm, 35 to 45 minutes. Serve warm, drizzled with cream or milk, if desired. Leftovers will keep refrigerated up to 1 day.

HANDS-ON TIME **10 MINUTES**
TOTAL TIME **50 MINUTES** SERVES **4**

SOW YOUR OATS
Or better yet, eat them. Find 10 more oatmeal recipes at realsimple.com/oatmeal.

PROP STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART

Credits

FIND OUT WHERE TO BUY ITEMS FEATURED IN THE ISSUE

Cover

Liz O'Brien Billy chair, $3,840, 212-755-3800; Thomas Pheasant brass spot table, $2,595: McGuire Furniture, 212-689-1565. White ceramic box (on mantel); white vases (on mantel), and vintage vase (left of mantel): The End of History, 212-647-7598. Nantucket Throw by Loopy Mango (in basket), from $545, loopymango.com.

The Simple List

Thank you to Keep America Beautiful, in Stanford, Connecticut; Janette Micelli, manager of external communications at Waste Management, in Tempe, Arizona; Ximena Martin, senior curator of public programs at LA Plaza de Cultura y Arte, in Los Angeles; Barbara Sibley, an anthropologis, and the owner and chef of La Palapa, in New York City; L. Stephen Velazquez, associate curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, in Washington, D.C.; Texas Tech University Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, in Lubbock.

No Hotline Necessary

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Pages 164 to 165: Gold and platinum Alchimie dinner plate, $140; gold and platinum Alchimie dessert plate, $90: L'Objet, 212-251-1011. Green water glass, $43, Sara, 212-772-3243. **Page 166:** Gold and platinum Alchimie dinner plate, $140; gold and platinum Alchimie dessert plate, $90: L'Objet, 212-251-1011. Green water glass, $43, Sara, 212-772-3243. **Page 168:** Gold Alchimie cereal bowl, $90; gold Alchimie dessert plate, $90: L'Objet, 212-251-1011. **Pages 170 to 171:** Gold and silver Alchimie dinner plate, $140; gold and silver Alchimie dessert plate, $90: L'Objet, 212-251-1011. White bowl (beet salad), $180, Sara, 212-0772-3243. **Page 172:** Platinum Alchimie dinner plate, $140, L'Objet, 212-251-1011. Green water glass, $43, Sara, 212-772-3243. **Page 175:** Platinum Alchimie charger (raspberry crostata), $200, L'Objet, 212-251-1011. Fortuny Ashanti dessert plate (lower left), $275, L'Objet, 212-251-1011.

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A Life in Full

THE SIMPLE LIFE AIN'T SO SIMPLE WHEN YOU'VE GOT 89 MOUTHS TO FEED. SOME HOMEGROWN WISDOM FROM A BONA FIDE HOMESTEADER.

JEANNE LYDON, 41

- Owner of Sun Harvest Farm
- Married to Mark Lydon, with two kids, Elliot, 9, and Abby, 7
- Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

PREP DINNER
"In the morning, I'm usually sautéing stuff to go in the Crockpot. With my day being so busy, this is how I get dinner on the table."

PLANTING THE SEEDS
"Some lessons are informal and hands-on, like learning about edible flowers or identifying trees."

8:25 A.M. "I may be a farmer, but I don't get up with the roosters. I'm not even a morning person. Since I homeschool my kids and don't have to go to an office, there's no need to rush."

11:15 A.M. "A friend of mine homeschools, too. Once a week, her kids—Juniper, Oakely, and Arlo [not shown]—and mine spend the day together so the children get social interaction."

WHAT FARMING HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT LIFE

LESSON NO. 1
Roll with the punches. No matter how well you plan, a lamb will die, a crop will fail, a child will get sick. Focus on what to do next.

LESSON NO. 2
When a power struggle occurs, be it with an animal or a child, show respect. Breathe, then try to see it from his perspective.

LESSON NO. 3
Follow passion. I hope I'm showing my kids that making a living can be fulfilling.

1:30 P.M. "I'm moving 12 sheep to a fresh patch of pasture to graze. I also have 7 turkeys, 6 pigs, 30 chickens, and 30 ducks. I sell hay, wool, meat, and eggs and teach cheese making."

3:45 P.M. "It's important to me that the kids have chores. Since they were little, they've tagged along with me when I feed the chickens and pigs. Now it's become their responsibility."

COUNTRY LIVING
"I'm from suburban Massachusetts. But when I interned on a Vermont farm, I fell in love with the lifestyle."

5:45 P.M. "Once my husband, Mark, gets home, we'll have dinner outside. He's an engineer, so I run a lot of the show on my own. He's happy working in an office yet living on a farm."

6:30 P.M. "I often work until sunset. Depending on the time of year, I'm either weeding in the garden, harvesting, or canning. Then the whole family may unwind with a movie or a book."

Photographs by Rob Howard

BEHOLD, AN OVEN FOR THOSE WHO MAKE A STATEMENT WITH EVERYTHING THEY MAKE

Revolutionary cooking power. Chef-inspired design. Presenting the completely reimagined KitchenAid® double wall oven.

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